THE BOOKMAN

Edited by Seward Collins

JUNE, 1931 VOL. LXXIII; NO. 4

JOHN DONNE: THE MIDDLE PHASE

by G. R. Elliott

IN THIS tercentenary year of his death John Donne is more alive among us than he has been at any other time since the seventeenth century. Neglected in the eighteenth and revived in the nineteenth century, he has been studied and imitated increasingly during the past thirty years. However, our modern intimacy with him, if intense, has so far been rather narrow. It has centered in his verse. But the bulk of Donne's verse belongs to his youth; and for him it was a pastime, not a profession. So that if, as he liked to believe, the dead are aware of the doings of the living, he must now be amused at the professional solemnity with which his poetic style is regarded by its devotees. A recent reviewer* asserts that "no poet before, none since, has packed the agonies of such an intense and brooding intellect into his verse" (not even Dante, one asks?) and that Donne set us the example of "tightening up thought with feeling so that in the end they become one". Certainly the second clause is true of many passages in Donne. But regarding his poetry as a whole Professor Grierson, who has the distinction of being a good critic of it as well as the definitive editor of its text, is surely right in terming it "a poetry in which intellect and feeling are seldom or never perfectly fused in a work that is of imagination all compact". Elsewhere he speaks of its "peculiar blend of passion and thought, feeling and ratiocination". A very extraordinary *blend*, not a complete fusion. Such is Donne's poetry, and such is Donne the man. Only if we accept him as such can we bring him richly alive again and make him a real help for life and literature, instead of a psychic and literary curiosity, in the middle years of the twentieth century.

In the middle of the seventeenth century his posthumous life was strong and full. His magnificent pulpit oratory kept on echoing in the public ear. His sermons and letters were published and eagerly read, as well as his poems. He charmed a wide variety of

* London *Times Literary Supplement*, July 31, 1930. The leading article in the same journal for March 26, 1931, seems to me to give a psycho-romantically distorted view of Donne.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

persons, all the way from Suckling, that brief candle of cynic gaiety, to the slow, pious, pastoral Walton. While Walton ruminated through many years the ascetic sanctity of his Dean of St. Paul's, young bloods were kindled one after another by the sensual wit of Jack Donne, as he was called in his youthful years. Others were treasuring the memory of Master Donne the tireless scholar and charming man of the world. No one was trying in our modern fashion to "explain" Donne. His violent contrasts were accepted, apparently, as quite natural. No one was worrying about them. No one was trying to fuse them in the pale heat of psychologic theory. No modern biographer was trying to fit all his parts into a single smart picture or, having tried unsuccessfully, was feeling annoyed that this could not be done. Here I see I have slipped into that play upon his name that delighted Donne himself. How could the most original literary mind of his time take so much pleasure in the most obvious of puns? Or further, as Mr. Lytton Strachey has queried, "by what perverse magic were intellectual ingenuity and theological ingenuousness intertwined in John Donne?" In the seventeenth century these two aspects of him were sufficiently noted: the first was obvious to all, and many, no doubt, were enlightened enough to perceive the second. But it seems that no one saw how perversely magical it was, on the part of God and Nature, to combine such incongruous qualities in one and the same man. The fact is that Donne's contrasts were more or less rooted in a certain incongruity that the modern mind has striven to root out—the incongruity of God and Nature.

The cult of Donne today, then, is involved in a significant paradox. He has been finally recognized as the most complex and intriguing personality in the history of English poetry. But the opposite poles of experience that generated the cross-currents of his nature are not recognized as valid. Hence he hangs flashing in our atmosphere. He appears to have no terminal connections with our modern earth. He is not really explicable in our terms. And it is irritating when a person of whom we are so fond persists in refusing to be "natural" in our sense of the word. Variety seems to us natural, so long as it is superficial. We cultivate it strenuously, by way of relief from our haunting sense that, beneath the surface, all is one. We have in our modern blood a feeling that fundamental and inexplicable oppositions are not real. But Donne incessantly points to these. We are therefore allured on the surface, and repelled underneath, by his contrasts.

These are especially evident in the middle phase of his life, beginning in his late twenties and comprising the first fifteen years of the seventeenth century. This phase is slighted by Grierson. He says it is "on the whole the least attractive period of Donne's life and work . . . the wit, the courtier, the man of the world, and the divine jostle each other in Donne's works in a way that is not a little disconcerting to readers of an age and temper less habituated to strong contrasts". But this middle phase, however disconcerting to the modern temper, mainly reveals the temper of Donne. His writing, on the whole, declined. In verse his brilliance and productiveness fell off, and he had not yet found the way to the purple heights of his prose. But though the dates of most of his poems are uncertain, I think there is good reason for assigning many of them, those that are richest in human meaning, to this period. Certainly it comprises the great bulk of his letters—written with a homely and flexible charm that comes closer to us in our normal mood than the gorgeous eloquence of his sermons. In fact it is in this period that Donne is nearest to being a normal and yet distinguished man. He is leaving behind him the sensuous and cynical aspects of his youth: he is approaching the ascetic devotion of his late forties and fifties. In the interval the whole range of his nature is active. His extraordinary oppositions are all alive, and he

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is trying to see what he can do with them —whether the combatants can be induced to keep house together happily, or whether some of them will have to be extirpated. In this phase the ruling motive of Donne is a keen, fresh love of human virtue.

The word "virtue" is not prominent in the mind and art of the twentieth century so far. It has been spoiled for many persons by the process of vicious abuse on the one hand, and vicious narrowing on the other, which it has undergone during the past two hundred years. And the thing itself, the manly directness and strength of character intended by the old word "virtue", is being sapped considerably by cunning theories and cheap conventions. Perhaps when these have rendered people sufficiently unhappy, and when science has still further opened up those mystical interstices in the physical universe through which a thin and denatured spirituality can seep in upon us, there may come about a public revival of sentimental religiosity. Unvirtuous naturalism may be followed, as so often in human experience, by a kind of other-worldliness that is just as unvirtuous. Many of our oncoming literary wits may experience this conversion. And they may draw aid and comfort from the old wit, John Donne. But they can do so only by slurring over his middle phase, only by expurgating his troubled efforts at virtue.

When Donne was still in his first phase the English literary world was stirred to its depths by the publication of a vast poetic torso called *The Faerie Queene*. "The general end of all the book", the author announced, "is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline." In its style the poem was anathema from the standpoint of young Donne, but not in its "general end". For Spenser had here shadowed forth an idea that was strongly at work in the best wits of the English Renaissance, no matter how different their styles—the idea of the *distinctive* beauty and power of the life of human virtue in its middle realm between the life of the animal world and the life of the gods. Not that human virtue was to become an independent mode. It was not divisible from religion, from the true spirit of religion. On the other hand it was not, as in the popular medieval outlook, entirely inseparable from Christian dogma. For the sake of religion itself, and above all for the sake of humanity, virtue was now to be cultivated on its own distinctive level, and to be nourished not only from Christianity but also from the revived ethics of the ancients and from the nobler elements of non-Christian mythologies. Such is the idea of Book Two of *The Faerie Queene*, when read as a powerful complement and qualification of the Christianity of Book One, and as a philosophic preparation for the profound reflections of pagan religious imagery in the later Books.

A regard for virtuous gentility, as well as gentlemanly virtuosity, was an integral part of the temper of young Donne—assiduous law-student, avid traveller, ambitious office-seeker, amazing wit, and, in some unknown degree, loose gallant about town. It is clear that he had pecked his way in gay haste out of the shell of the strict Roman Catholicism in which he had been brought up. He did not take flight from the very idea of organized religion, as many wits have done in recent times, any more than he rejected organized education and organized politics. He was at once too fortunate and too intelligent for that, and too catholic in his human interests. Catholic doctrine remained, and Protestant theology soon became, a subject for cool study in his spare hours along with the new natural philosophy. But his heart was given to the world—the world of letters, still more of men, and most of women. In this various world, however, he found the idea of virtue, though often foully wronged in practice, freshly alive and captivating for the mind and imagination. "Virtuous and gentle discipline" was recognized in literary circles as the distinction of humanity, as the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

highway of human *vitality*. It was the criterion for young wits who now stood aloof from religion but who, like Sir Guyon in Spenser's poem, had no intention of sinking their human selves in what was called "nature".

This human standard, alive in the very fibre of his wit, enabled Donne as a youthful poet to treat the facts of sex with a brilliant veracity not equalled so far by his successors in the twentieth century. Our sexual writers in comparison with Donne have been very unlucky. First they had a monstrous accumulation of bourgeois prudery to react from. Thereupon they found themselves caught in a monstrous web of sexual theory woven by a patient series of spidery academic mentalities. And so they have suffered, even unto middle age, from a kind of naturalism that Donne could play with and dismiss when little more than a boy. They have exemplified, in voluminous prose, errors that he condensed into a few poetic epigrams. They are too conscientiously sexual to be sexually witty. Donne's wit in this kind, though subject to gross lapses in taste, was firmly human at core. His imagination was mordantly aware of animal functions and, at the same time, sharply detached from them. The awareness was due to the detachment. His wit was human steel when it struck the quartz of physical nature. Hence the quick brilliance of the sparks.

In his youthful view of women he reacted of course from the "barren angels", as he called them, of sonneteering chivalry. Yet his wit was purgative, not destructive, of the medieval ideality concerning woman. His grossest poetry is not gross with the wordy vapors of semi-animal consciousness. It has an impudent, sardonic relish quite unparalleled in our language just because its author is so humanly aware of its animality. In the satirical poem, *Love's Progress*, love is shown progressing *backwards* through a Rabelaisian terrain towards the bog of sheer physicality —from which, however, it is repelled in a climax of derision and disgust. In *The Ecstasy* love progresses in the opposite direction, not without subtle irony on the part of the poet, and is ready to evaporate into Neo-Platonic unity when he suddenly recalls it to the human body. Such are the opposite termini of Donne's poetry of sex. But his passionate wit ranges the whole estate of love. And his whereabouts at any given moment, his roaming or homing turn, is given in the very movement of the verse —from the droll, battering impatience of this:

> Makes virtue woman? must I cool my blood
> Till I both be, and find one, wise and good?

to the simple and assured tune of this:

> Virtue attired in woman see. . . .
> And forget the He and She.

The waggish poem *Variety* compresses into seventy lines of staccato wit, romantic appeal, and hidden irony all known arguments in favor of promiscuity. Social custom is scored for spoiling the flight and boldness of love. To cap the climax the poet boasts himself to be one of the "few strong in themselves and free" who are capable of following "nature" and "liberty". Then, with a sudden laconic twist, he informs the reader that these supermen, after all, are immature youngsters who "with firmer age" may regain their "liberties"—that is, their freedom from "free love". In the first part of the poem, where nature is the agent, the swing of the style is this:

> All things do willingly in change delight,
> The fruitful mother of our appetite . . .

But the closing passage is weighted and balanced with the effort of right human freedom:

> What time in years and judgment we reposed
> Shall not so easily be to change disposed,
> Nor to the art of several eyes obeying,
> But beauty with true worth securely weighing;
> Which being found assembled in some one,
> We'll love her ever, and love her alone.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This mode of verse, so out of fashion just now, is for Donne a natural and necessary clearing at the center of the forest of erotic moods—a sunlit place. On any side of it satyrs may be seen grinning and leaping and chasing among the leaves. But in the midst of it is a human dwelling, where there is visionary sweetness without sentimentality:

> If ever any beauty I did see
> Which I desired and got, 'twas but a dream of thee . . .

and constant passion revealing itself behind homely flashes of wit:

> Who is so safe as we? where none can do
> Treason to us, except one of us two . . .

or all these qualities combined, as in the passage where the soul of the lover at home, while the other travels abroad, is the fixed foot of a pair of compasses:

> . And though it in the center sit,
> Yet when the other far doth roam
> It leans, and hearkens after it,
> And grows erect as that comes home.

The stanza just quoted was probably written for Mrs. Donne. But the attempt, as in Gosse's *Life and Letters of Donne*, to arrange all his amorous poems in accordance with the known, and unknown, facts of his life —his supposed advance from sheer license to crystal monogamy—is of course a misapplication of modern subjectivism to a dramatic age. But also it means a failure to apprehend the vividness with which the norm of "virtuous love" (for such was the common phrase of the day) was present to Donne from the first. His appreciation of fidelity did not begin with his love of Ann More, whom he married in 1601; nor did this experience dry up the licentious vein, much less the healthily carnal vein, in his verse. Such might well have been the case if he had grown up in an atmosphere tainted with the false and nasty antithesis of passion and constancy. But his poetry was built on the clear and sound antithesis (the "violent contrast", some of our critics would say) of virtuous and unvirtuous love. The twilight region between these two kinds of passion is deadly for the arts. No doubt this region may be investigated fruitfully by a certain type of mind, but not by the mind of an excellent poet. Now, Donne's mind was keenly investigative as well as poetic. He is our chief poet (in current jargon) of "the psycho-physical life". But this is because his mind was nourished not on psycho-physicisms but on great love-poetry, and because he was capable of ingenuousness, as Mr. Strachey notes, as well as of ingenuity. He accepted with a vital ingenuousness the great and given scale of values in human love as revealed in the best of human experience. He satirized the conventional acceptance of that scale on the part of bourgeois souls, and the cloudy embroidery of it on the part of amorous mystics. But he did not expend his intelligence on picayune reactions from it, or on solemn analyses of mysteries beyond the reach of analysis. His ingenuity was free to play along the whole scale of erotic moods because it was not clogged with the unpoetic effort of scaling down the differences between them. He could become our wittiest poet of inconstancy because he did not seriously question the fact that constancy is the root of the most vital kind of human passion.

Certainly Ann More helped to usher him the way that he was going. So did a number of excellent persons whose friendship he enjoyed while the middle phase of his career was unfolding. He said that friendship at this time was his "second religion", but it appears to have been his first. His Christianity was nominal; and he was very critical of popular Christian tendencies, as in his *Third Satire*. He noted that through the controversies of the sects, past and present, many dubious points were erected into "positive and dogmatical truths" and accepted by men in "a lazy weariness so they might have something to rely upon". He satirized "those who write for religion without it" and, above

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

all, those who regarded Christianity as displacing the morality of the ancients, "as though our religion were but an art of thrift to make a little virtue go far". He feared, better than he feared it in his last period, the hazy emotionalism surrounding the doctrine of Vicarious Atonement:

From trusting so much to Thy blood
That, in that hope, we wound our soul away . . .
Lord deliver us.

In another poem he declares there is no virtue without religion, but defines religion as follows:

Seek we then our selves in our selves: for as
Men force the sun with much more force to pass
By gathering his beams with a crystal glass,
So we, if we into our selves will turn,
Blowing our spark of virtue, may out-burn
The straw which doth about our hearts sojourn.

At this time God is for Donne not so much a person as "Almighty Virtue . . . our form's form and our soul's soul": He is the power for virtue, for temperance, that acts in prayer:

Hear Thyself now, for Thou in us dost pray . . .
That our affections kill us not—nor die—
Hear us, weak echoes, O thou Ear and Cry.

Therefore, says Donne, in considerable contrast with his later practice, prayer should be well-tempered and not made "elegantly nor vehemently". He prays that his thoughts, words, and deeds may have such "temper and harmony that they be not, by a misdevout consideration of the next life, treacherously negligent of the offices and duties" of this life. He is concerned for the right human distance from deity—I think, by way of restraining his own subconscious tendency towards emotional immanentism. In this connection the Copernican astronomy, destined to make many persons feel that man is a mere speck in the universe, supplies him with an image he needs: "the new astronomy is thus appliable well, that we which are a little earth should rather move towards God, than that He which is fulfilling and can come no whither, should move towards us". A little later we find him remarking that religion is "too spiritual to be seen by us" and must assume "an apparent body of good life and works".

He is preoccupied with virtue, in the full sense of the word: "True virtue is Soul, always in all deeds All". We watch him studying it in living examples and trying to build it in himself. He thanks one of his friends for particular aid in learning "truth and honesty" and adds: "the conversation with worthy men and of good example, though it sow not virtue in us, yet produceth it and ripeneth it". He is much occupied with the problem of right imitation. Following the example of another might easily be a very second-rate wisdom, he says, or it might be "the hardest of all, the issue of the first wisdom, for I cannot *know* that this example should be followed except I *knew* that it was good, and so I judge my judge". The doctrine of imitation and exemplariness was of course very prominent in Renaissance thought. And it was often enough put to bad uses. Writers would laud their friends and patrons, with histrionic insincerity, as models for all mankind. A few glaring instances of this appear in Donne; but they do not include that extraordinary poem written for a wealthy patron, *An Anatomy of the World*. It has been quite misread by Gosse, Grierson, and others because of antecedent prejudice and failure to appreciate Donne's passionate interest in the idea of exemplariness, which culminates in this poem, written towards the close of his middle period. Here, with perfervid sincerity, he tries to erect, against the background of an evil world, the notion of an ideal feminine being—"the best that I could conceive"—that should "for life and death a pattern be". The movement of the poem, more ambitious than successful, is that of darting epigram merging incessantly into an undercurrent of song. The theme of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the song-like beauty and power that can be found in great example echoes and re-echoes:

Vouchsafe to call to mind that God did make
A last and lasting'st piece, a song. He spake
To Moses to deliver unto all
That song, because he knew they would let fall
The Law, the Prophets, and the History,
But keep the song still in their memory.

In its way the poem is great—greater, for instance, than Shelley's *Epipsychidion*, which attempts a similar theme with fatal unveracity of emotion. But it is marred by an intemperate other-worldliness that looks forward to Donne's third period.

In his second period he was mainly devoted to the pursuit of cheerful and humane temperance. "Labour", he writes, "to keep your alacrity and dignity in an even temper, for in a dark sadness indifferent things seem abominable, or necessary." He longed for the right temper "even as lame things thirst their perfection":

How happy is he which hath due place assigned
To his beasts, and disafforested his mind.

He was much disabled, he saw, by his moody and violent complexion—"meteor-like, of stuff and form perplext". His letters paint it in vivid colors, part earnest and part gay. He notes with rueful jocularity that sometimes his very mind appears to have hysteria. He may be so "transported with jollity" that he has to "hang leads" at his heels by forcibly reducing his thoughts to his everyday duties. Or he may be so dejected with sadness that he must either, he says, "countermine it with another sadness or kindle squibs about me again and fly into sportfulness and company". In a contemporary poem he says men tend to be "dead clods of sadness or light squibs of mirth". But this is merely the surface of the question. In many passages he looks into the very heart of it. "Vices have swellings and noise," he says, "because, being extremes, they dwell far asunder, and they maintain both a *foreign* war against virtue and a *civil* against one another." Therefore, in the development of human virtue, "evenness conduces as much to strength and firmness as greatness doth".

In startling contrast to those words is such a passage as the following, which anticipates Donne's third phase: "the grace of Almighty God doth everything suddenly and hastily . . . enlightens us, warms us, heats us, ravishes us, at once". Certainly divine grace has to operate continually in that fashion. Nevertheless the fashion is second-rate: it is below the divine temperance and due to human deficiency. And this deficiency is very marked in the case of Donne. It was established in him by the blunders of his early manhood. Determined to be neither saint nor sinner he set out to be a successful and useful man of the world through advancement in the public service. But at the age of thirty he ruined his prospects, not by his marriage, but by the timid and foolish secrecy of it. Thereafter he showed that he could not learn to be happy in poverty and retired domestic life, however rich in love. Refusing the routine of ordinary professions, he vainly waited year after year for office. Servility followed rashness; at his worst he licked the hands of King James's atrocious favorite, Rochester. Meanwhile, with helpless self-condemnation, he watched his young wife wear herself out with annual child-bearing. Her death in 1617 together with the necessity of caring for his young family, and of not increasing it, was the earthly factor that brought about his conversion to celibate religion at the age of forty-seven.

But the inner reality of his conversion is no less patent. For some years previous to 1617 his writings show the divine grace acting upon him not in "evenness"—to adapt his own words—but in "hasty and violent" heats, during intervals of his worldly preoccupations. In the spring of 1608 (according to Gosse's conjecture) he confesses, with pathetic beauty, and with keen allusion to the relation of temperance and religion: "Every-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thing refreshes, and I wither, and I grow older and not better; my strength diminishes, and my load grows; and being to pass more and more storms, I find that I have not only cast out all my ballast which nature and time gives—reason and discretion—and so am as empty and light as vanity can make me, but I have over-fraught myself with vice, and so am subject to two contrary racks, sinking and oversetting". He feels himself pervaded by a single "root" of evil, of vanity and indiscretion, which must be pulled out, if only he could lay hold of it. But not long afterwards he reiterates his yearning for public office: "men of wit and delightful conversation are but as moles for ornament except they be so incorporated into the body of the world that they contribute something to the sustentation of the whole". Fortunately there is a mixed providence to provide for mixed men. In 1621 this late, hasty, and damaged saint, this extraordinary "man of wit and delightful conversation", was "incorporated" into *both* worlds as Dean of St. Paul's.

His sermonic style, with its personal power and religious inadequacy, is treated with sensitive accuracy by Mr. T. S. Eliot in his essay on Lancelot Andrewes. Here I wish to point out that the frequent assertion that Donne at heart adhered to the Catholic orthodoxy of his youth must be discounted. In religious catholicity, whatsoever its outward form, there is always a firm sense of the gradualness of spiritual ascension. But in Donne this sense was severely weakened by the conjunction of three factors: the nature of his conversion, his study of the mystical tradition, and his acceptance of Protestant catastrophism, so to call it, regarding eternity. In rejecting the Roman Catholic purgatory and hierarchy of saints he lost hold of the catholic idea which they body forth, and which is taught to us in a preliminary way by nature itself—the idea of eternal gradation. The lowest grade, Christianly called "hell", becomes in Donne's sermons so isolate and so unbelievable (as an eternal fact, not as a mere earthly experience) that he obviously does not much believe in it himself. Eternity for him is practically identical with "heaven", and this, he remarks in a letter of 1624, is a state from which the idea of progression is excluded, a state of instantaneous and miraculous perfection. In short, Donne took an eloquent part in establishing that catastrophic attitude (with or without "hell") which was bound to disable Christian theology when confronted with the non-catastrophic nature revealed by modern science; and which has now gone to hell, so to speak, pulling down a good deal of human happiness with it.

In other words, there was a bad discrepancy between Donne's study of temperance and his study of divinity. No doubt the divine grace must ever break in upon and disrupt our poor human temperance but always with the intent, according to catholic thought, of re-establishing it on a higher level. Great religious sages do not abolish one jot or tittle of the rule of human virtue; and they point us towards the divine temperance, as incorporating the divine peace. Ordinary men who lead good lives more or less tinctured with religion manage to effect a fruitful reconciliation between temperance and occasional inspiration. But Donne was neither an ordinary man nor a religious sage. It was well complained that his sermons were lacking in practical help for plain men. And in the intervals of his religious rhapsodies it was quite characteristic of the Dean to marry his young daughter, atrociously, to the queer old actor-manager, Ned Alleyn, and then to quarrel roundly with his son-in-law, his elder by seven years. . . . God, too often in Donne's treatment of Him, wears a moody and irrational air. To be sure, he experiences Him, not only with exceptional warmth and nearness, but also with much of humility and awe. Donne maintains the catholic mystery of the immanent transcendence of deity. But he maintains it with emotional intensity more than with character and intellect, and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

without a sure note of Peace. In other words the doctrine of divine transcendence is in Donne somewhat conventional and insubstantial, at bottom; it is on its way towards its dissolution in modern humanitarianism. He accepted it on catholic authority but did not himself become an authority on it—yet uttered it as one having authority. Obviously it did not suit his temperament; and, not obviously to himself, he never really suited his temperament to it. The far-flung dramatic emotion with which he enmeshes the divine transcendence reveals a lack of simple and complete conviction. His personal intensity towards God is very much at the expense of the super-personal law which is in God, and impels one to turn for relief (as indeed the modern world did turn for relief from exaggerated "personalism" in religion) to the sub-personal laws of natural science. Donne's sermons leave us with no firm sense of the Being in whom Personality and Law are sublimely at one—with no pure awe of the divine temperance.

Certainly the religious Donne is enigmatic. But we need not subscribe to the immense inscrutability that Gosse and several subsequent writers have found in him. Gosse speaks of "the mystery of his inscrutable character . . . the vast curves of his extraordinary and contradictory features". Well, his inscrutability is partly his inscrutiny of himself. Self-scrutiny is defective in proportion to the deficiency of one's sense of humor, and Donne's lagged far behind his wit, except in the richest moods of his middle period. And the humorous and urbane self-criticism which he then carried on was finally swallowed up by his tremendous sense of sin. He exaggerated and fought down what he took to be his chief devils; and the battle left him small energy, small *humor*, for revising the overweening eccentricities of his temperament. A modest, self-critical humor would have prevented (much to our loss) the histrionics of his closing days when he had his picture taken in his shroud. It would have prevented him, during his desperate illness in 1623, from hymning his very name into the hands of God:

I have a sin of fear, that when I have spun
My last thread, I shall perish on the shore;
But swear by Thyself that at my death Thy son
Shall shine as he shines now, and heretofore;
And, having done that, Thou hast done,
I fear no more.

There is really nothing more inscrutable in Donne than that immortal pun at the gates of death, especially if we put it alongside the following rare confession from his *Devotions*, composed on the same occasion: "I have sinned before Thy face, in my hypocrisies in prayer, in my ostentation, and the mingling a respect of myself in preaching Thy Word". And we cannot view this inscrutability without a smile except when our humor is depressed religiously, like Donne's. Humanly, his attitude is very piquant. He does not succeed in being so detached from the world, not only as he ought to be, but as he thinks he wants to be. "O my God," he cries, "speak louder, that so, though I do hear Thee now, then I may hear nothing but Thee . . . That which Thou wouldest have us to remember for compunction, we remember with delight." The pulsing memory of his own desires is felt in the outrushings of his human sympathies. He describes human weaknesses with an ardor in which religious reproval is mixed with close poetic delight. In one of his letters, he remarks that we may feel a smile continually on the lips of Jesus. But the temper of that smile is distant from Donne. His sense of humor is not transfigured—it is wittily repressed in the service of inadequate holiness. Such is the nature of Donne's inscrutability. It is very human. The rest of us are more or less inscrutable in the same fashion, though without so much wit, when we are more or less religious.

But such a sentence as the following, taken from an anonymous review, puts an inscrutable gulf between us and Donne: "His medieval imagination burned no less fiercely

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

at fifty, between the *monsters* Time and Eternity, than it had burned at twenty between inexplicable Love and Hate". (I have italicized one word.) No doubt there was something monstrous, or something inhumane and uncatholic as I have shown above, in Donne's tendency to make an *absolute* contrast between Time and Eternity. But the modern attempt to harpoon these two "monsters" and melt them together in the naturalistic blubber-ship, as being merely two forms of the same thing—great white whale —is positively inhuman. The god set up and worshipped during the past two centuries, the single vast evolving (or devolving) Nature, is hard to beat for monstrosity. Donne is true to a deep human instinct, and to the instinct of great poetry, in his sense of a real opposition between Eternity and Time. It is just because he experienced their opposition as essentially natural and awful, not monstrous, that his imagination could burn so fiercely, as the reviewer says, between them. It could also burn with a quiet flame of humanity, as when he remarks: "Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind". And indeed there is a lovely and sound human spirit in Donne's religious writings. Underneath their turbulencies one feels a groundswell of virtue and good sense coming on quietly from the middle phase of his life. That phase is a troubled enough sea. But its currents set toward humanity, far more convincingly than the last phase sets toward God.

When an adequate critical biography of him comes to be written, it will interpret his whole life and work in the light of his middle phase. For this, as I have tried to suggest, was not *merely* a phase, much less a negligible phase. It represents the groundtone of the whole man. This fact was of course not at all clear to Donne himself. In his late years, he liked to disparage his middle years, and to damn his early years. But the truth is, he was not nearly so damned at twenty, nor so saved at fifty, as he wished to believe; or as romantic critics would like to believe with certain changes in terminology. Nor was his improvement due, in the degree he fancied, to sudden and *special* operations of Grace. Using a handy old theological distinction, we may say that *common* Grace, working upon Donne in those years when his conscious connection with deity was of the slightest, turned his will and imagination more and more to virtue, enamoured him of the beauty and meaning of human virtue. The great educative factor in his life, the factor that educed the very "virtue" of Donne, was his struggle in his middle years to hold the middle way—the human position, as I like to call it—between romantic transport and religious ecstasy. If as a young man he had plunged from the one to the other he would have become, not just an imperfect saint, but a sanctified, and perhaps a sanctimonious, imperfection. His instinct in withholding himself so long from the priesthood was therefore right. His imagination was slowly and considerably humanized before it was sublimated, rather violently, into the Anglican form. His early writings, as I tried to show, are not primitivistic in their main trend but civil; they point forward to humanity. On the other hand his religious writings do not send our thought forward to sainthood so decisively as they send it back to that hesitant but very human, helpful, and captivating mixture that was Donne.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AUTHORS IN EPIGRAM

by Alfred Kreymborg

I.
AUTHORS
ABROAD

T. H.

This owl believed
in the blind moon of Fate,
pitied the helpless
and shrugged at the great.

D. H. L.

Fighting his own
and the whole world's disease,
this man had health
and he now has peace.

W. D. L. M.

Ghosts and hobgoblins
may not be the thing
while war's in the air—
but what can war sing?

A. H.

A grandson of science
tilts at the base
degeneration
of a once noble race.

K. M.

A girl brought Chekhov
across all the snows
and smiled on the sick
with a similar rose.

J. M.

A rhyming sailor's
at home in the chair
with Wordsworth and Nature,
and Jonson, the rare.

G. B. S.

He played the pro-German
in a daring balloon
that kept Britain dancing
to an old Irish tune.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

W. B. Y.

Dreaming of beauty,
he gave a green stage
Cathleen ni Houlihan's
passionate age.

J. J.

An Irish Jesuit
who left the parish
now thrills the world
from a room in Paris.

E. P.

He dropped his own land
on a backwoods shelf,
but luckily he
can't escape himself.

II.
AUTHORS
AT HOME

T. S. E.

A Yankee at
King George's Court
has made the wasteland
classical sport.

E. A. R.

Tilbury Town
and Camelot towers
look down on Death
and inhale dark flowers.

J. G. F.

Arkansas shipped
her Jeremiah
to sing out our sins
and bring Messiah.

R. F.

The fire and ice
of New England snow
will glow wherever
his sure steps go.

E. H.

Before he sailed over,
the sober all toiled,
and now he's arrived,
we're drunk and hardboiled.

E. L. M.

He brought the dead
from the grave to the bar
to tell hidden truths
about our false star.

G. S.

The crazy lads
who brought in Dada
are mad at a lady
who was born gaga.

V. L.

Glory Hallelujah,
Springfield, Illinois,
that gave us Abe Lincoln
and this booming boy!

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

C. S.

Leaving bottles
of milk at each door,
he tuned up strings
for the waking poor.

L. R.

The Irish spirit
inside her small bones
makes rebels leap
against bourgeois thrones.

D. B. H.

Haunted by darkies
who sing while they toil,
he raised a renascence
on whiter soil.

H. M.

A scrappy woman
made bankers pay
toward circulating poems
through the U. S. A.

W. S.

Hedonists needn't
sail an old sea,
searching for their
aristocracy.

W. G.

A Pagan walked South
from the hills of Maine,
and no matter where he wanders
he'll be heard from again.

M. B.

This ironist loves
what small worlds berate,
and boils them and boils them
in his loving hate.

E. S. V. M.

Defiant love sonnets
demanding nude joys
lure girls to be naughty
and live like the boys.

G. S.

The old Pacific
lost some of its blue
the night that he dreamt
that his songs were through.

E. W.

Following an eagle,
a proud woman's wings
are folded where Death
as haughtily sings.

R. J.

He snubs our small souls
in his towered disdain
and telescopes Greece
for the Grecians again.

R. B.

This hunchback gave
our tragic ball
a sounder curve,
a more musical.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

V. W. B.

A clear-headed book
by a lad of twenty-three
destroyed generations
of the Puritan flea.

H. D.

Coral seas call
an Imagist
to find Sapphic jewels
in a modern mist.

L. M.

He must have stolen
his eye from the sun,
unless the high sky
stole his for one.

E. E. C.

Imprisoned and lost
in an enormous room
he drove out the tragic
with a syncopated broom.

S. L.

He dug up fame
for a village street
that most of our
growing towns repeat.

P. R.

Whenever we lose
ourselves in the gales,
he studies our rudders
and steadies our sails.

S. A.

Ohio was naught
but Ohio once,
until his warm art
found words for the dunce.

A. L.

The fight went out of
the poets' own war
when tantalizing death
destroyed her high wall.

E. O'N.

Monte Cristo's boy
lives up to the line
his father recited:
"The world is mine!"

H. L. M.

Katzenjammer,
beating on a drum,
knocks off high hats
in a cultivated slum.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

HENRY JAMES AND YOUNG WRITERS

by William Troy

It is perhaps another evidence of his genius that Henry James, like certain other great writers of the past, has come to mean something different to each of the successive literary generations that have taken up his work. What James meant to the readers of *Harpers* and the *Atlantic* in the eighties and nineties, what he meant to the generation of Mr. H. G. Wells, or to the generation of Mr. T. S. Eliot and Mr. Ezra Pound, was probably not any of the things that he means, or may come to mean, to the generation in which we are naturally much interested—the present one. So abundant are the implications of his work that he is capable of being read—or misread—to suit the needs of widely different classes of readers, of distinct periods of literary taste; capable also of being "used", in a very real sense, as Shakespeare was used by the German romantics of the eighteenth century, or as Baudelaire is now being used by a whole wing of contemporary French and American poets. Of what possible "use" in this sense may James prove to be to the present generation of novelists? What lesson may this formidable and often-disputed master offer to the inheritors of his craft in our time? If his example includes anything of value special to them, if his strength corresponds to any of their numerous weaknesses, he should be appropriated at once, reinstated in the direct current of our letters.

It happens, moreover, that James is in immediate need of some sort of reinstatement at the moment. He remains suspended in that vague limbo of disrepute to which the last generation of Freudian critics so often consigned their victims. He is easily the most tolerated author of his size in modern literature. The elaborate execution which Mr. Van Wyck Brooks performed in *The Pilgrimage of Henry James* was simply the final blow in the long catastrophe of his reputation. For more than forty years James had been chiefly read by people who admired him for hardly any more palpable reason than the vague penumbra of gentility which surrounded his pages. The close of his life was rendered positively unhappy (as we know from his letters) by the ribald humors of a new order which dismissed him as nothing short of a pompous old fool. Mr. Wells's brutal parody in *Boon* served to lay the ghost for pre-war England. All that remained for Mr. Brooks in 1925 was to dispose of James in a more comprehensive fashion and in terms that should be more effective for the period. What Mr. Brooks did to James's reputation, however, is important, for the semi-ridiculous, semi-tragic figure that he created is the most popular conception of him at the moment.

For Mr. Brooks, it will be recalled, James offered nothing more nor less than a case-history. Here was an example of an American who had sacrificed not only his promise as an artist but also his identity as an individual in the fruitless effort to adjust himself to an alien culture. All the habits of James's

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mind—"the caution, the ceremoniousness, the baffled curiosity, the nervousness and constant self-communion, the fear of committing himself"—are traceable to the long years he spent in England, where he had never been anything but "an enchanted exile in a museum-world". A self-conscious guest in a house where he had never been at home, James reflected even in his style "the evasiveness, the hesitancy, the scrupulosity of an habitually embarrassed man". The diagnosis becomes steadily more emphatic toward the end. In James's later writings Mr. Brooks can discern no more than "the confused reveries of an invalid child". It is as if the author of *Roderick Hudson* and *The Portrait of a Lady* had developed at the last into a kind of "impassioned geometer—or, shall we say, some vast arachnid of art, pouncing upon the tiny air-blown particle and wrapping it round and round". What stands out most remarkably today in this analysis is a single statement which throws ever so much more light on Mr. Brooks than it does on Henry James: "What interested him (in his novels) was not the figures but their relations, the relations which alone make pawns significant".

To Mr. Brooks and his generation, as such a remark implies, an interest in relations was almost certain evidence of sterility in a writer. To concentrate on relations was to be faced immediately with the problems of value on which they hinged, and to betray an interest in any such problems was to be rendered more than a little suspect at the time. It was genuinely difficult for Mr. Brooks to conceive how a writer of James's manifest intelligence could have considered the relations of his "figures" more important than the movements of pawns in a game. It was difficult because it was almost impossible for his generation to recognize the existence of values or the part they usually play in vital literary creation. Even a game, it was forgotten, must have its rules; and for a game to be properly absorbing, for either player or spectator, the values assigned the rules must be accepted, temporarily at least, with something like seriousness. For James himself the rules did exist, and he accepted them with a passionate seriousness. Before ever they were apprehended by his mind, they were *felt*, and with enough intensity of feeling to provide the center, the very foundation of his artistic task. The "pawns" of his game, however inanimate they may sometimes seem in other respects, are always alive, even violently alive, in that portion of their being which James chose to explore and represent, because he believed it to be the richest and "most finely contributive" of all—the conscience.

By such a term as conscience one need not understand anything more definite than James himself ever intended by the term—that region of the mind, that area of our habitual mental activity, which is reserved for the recognition and solution of moral conflicts. At least to the extent that his "figures" do, every one of them, function in this region are they worthy of being called *characters*—or the label is without meaning. Often, it is true, the relations, situations, or patterns in which the somewhat special experience of their creator involves them are so unique or complex, so extremely tenuous, as to make them seem to respire a little outside the usual zone of verisimilitude. But the comparison with a geometer is inaccurate if it refers to anything but the hard and luminous detachment with which a given intellectual terrain is surveyed. For James the conscience that controlled the actions of his personages was something real and concrete; the values which determined for Fleda Vetch and Lambert Strether and Milly Theale the solution of their delicately attenuated problems were for him *true* values. For James's reader, however, who is primarily concerned with the interest that these problems afford, with their possible esthetic result, there is no such obligation to accept these particular values as true. For him it is simply necessary to accept their reality in the minds of the characters, to imagine, if only for the time being,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that they *might* be considered true, for the sake of the satisfaction that their representation provides in an orderly executed work of art.

For various reasons this was an effort of the imagination that few in the last generation showed themselves able or willing to make. Perhaps the chief reason was the particular psychological absolutism of the time, which submerged personality beneath that plane of conscious judgment which for James and others before him had constituted the real domain of character. The belief in character that had sustained James was not recognized because it was not understood; and his fervid explorations could only be explained as the mystifying vagaries of someone who had ventured too far outside the normal bounds of experience. He could be accounted for only as a kind of exquisite monster, as the victim of some fundamental lesion of personality or—as the critics would have it—as a psychological "case". The formula was ready at hand and it was rich in possibilities of embroidery. Everything in James's mind and work—his characters, his themes, his form and style even—became immediately clear when it was once remembered that he was an American who had spent most of his adult years in Europe.

Whatever truth there may be in this formula as applied to other native American writers who have forsworn their country for the warm securities of European culture, one may question its validity as a total explanation of all that characterized Henry James as a man and an artist. Some of the more superficial biases of his mind, some of the minor idiosyncrasies of his style, can doubtless be traced to the influence of his prolonged residence in England. But one might show the equivalent consequences on his contemporary, William Dean Howells, of a migration from Ohio to Boston at about the same period. Unquestionably also, in his choice of backgrounds, characters, and the situations in which he placed them, James was affected for better or worse by the particular foreign milieu in which he happened to pass the greater part of his life. If certain subjects, like that of American "innocence" caught in the toils of European duplicity, recur constantly throughout his work it is merely because these subjects repeated themselves so often in the course of his experience, and therefore became the most familiar patterns of reality available to him. To complain of these subjects, however, on the grounds that they are too narrow, or too special, or too refined, is illegitimate. It is to decline to play what James himself called "the fair critical game with an author", which is to grant him his postulates. "His subject is what is given him—given him by influences, by a process, with which we have nothing to do; since what art, what revelation, can ever really make such a mystery, such a passage as the private life of the intellect, adequately traceable for us? His treatment of it, on the other hand, is what he actively gives; and it is with what he gives that we are critically concerned."

Behind and above everything else was Henry James's mind, with its special quality, endowment and direction. What is all too seldom realized, for it would alone discredit Mr. Brooks's thesis, is that the main set and direction of that mind was already well established long before James ever made his decision to settle in England. Already he had formulated, in a review of Walt Whitman written in 1865, what was to be the principle of his artistic creed for the whole of his career: "To be positive, one must have something to say; to be positive requires reason, labor, and art; and art requires above all things a suppression of one's self to an idea". The real problem before him in those early wander-years was not the quest of some place that might change or modify the native bent of his mind, but one that should offer to his mind greater opportunities for play, a richer field in which to grow and expand, a more *plausible* background for the working-out of his particular "idea". It was a

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

problem of nutrition. And it was only after a trial-and-error process—for there was the important experiment of his year in Paris—that he hit upon the country that seemed most suitable to his purpose.

It might quite as easily be shown that the truth is the exact opposite of what Mr. Brooks and others have contended: that for James residence in England, rather than being a source of sterility and corruption, was an indispensable condition of fulfilment. Since these critics had made up their minds not to occupy themselves with his work, with what as an artist he had "given", they might equally well have considered the reverse of the medal: What would have happened to James if he had turned to the society that awaited him in the Boston or New York of the late nineteenth century? Would James, with his peculiarly refined sensibility, have escaped an ordeal less intense than that which Mr. Brooks has elsewhere traced in the career of Mark Twain? Indeed, there was hardly any means of salvation for the artist in Mr. Brooks's scheme of nineteenth-century America. Upon further reflection Mr. Brooks might well have concluded that in one sense there is never any salvation for the artist—at any time or in any place. His only chance of fulfilment is to be as good an artist as he can under the conditions of his time and the limitations of his own temperament. But such a view would lead instantly to an entirely different kind of criticism. One would have to concentrate more directly on the study and evaluation of a writer's work.

II

The specific question which we set out to examine was in what sense and to what extent may James's example have any special meaning for the novelists of our generation. How, we may inquire, may he show them the way to make their work more deeply and broadly *interesting*?

For the sole obligation of the novel, its one excuse for being, as James insisted, is that it be interesting. The question which such a demand leaves in the mind is, of course, what, properly speaking, constitutes the interest of a novel? Fortunately, in his essays, prefaces and letters James has provided us with a complete and lucid exposition of his own view of the problem. There is life obviously, which is the novel-writer's material, and there is art, which consists of the special use that he makes of his material. Life is common, inexhaustible, chaotic—a "splendid waste", to use James's fine phrase. It is art alone that gives it beauty and meaning, through the form and expression with which the creative mind endows it, for "expression is creation and makes the reality". To be interesting, therefore, a novel must give or lend something to the "splendid waste" which is life. That something is "composition", the design which the artist makes out of the scattered and unchecked flow of his impressions and responses. Without such design the novel would have no identity as an art-form, no value as a projection of reality, and hence no meaning to the mind or the imagination. "I hold that interest may be, *must be*, exquisitely made and created, and that if we don't make it, we who undertake to, nobody and nothing will make it for us", James wrote to Wells at the close of his life. And in the same letter he makes an even more complete avowal of his belief in the unique and absolute value of the artistic process: "It is art that *makes* life, makes importance, for our consideration and application of these things, and I know of no substitute whatever for the force and beauty of its process".

The various alternatives to this view of the novelist's special rôle and function are necessarily vague and contradictory. There are for example the exponents of "life"—of life *tout court*, of life at any cost. What precisely, however, do these people mean? If the novel is to be classified at all it is as an art-form, and if art means anything it means the process by which the materials of life are

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

arranged and fused into a unity. It is only through its unity that the meaning and value of a given work of art are to be discovered. A novel with insufficient evidence of unity represents mere arbitrariness, or ineptitude, or the surrender of the mind to the rich disorder of nature. It is possible, James admitted, to reproduce life—its substance and even its quality, its imponderable multiplicity—but without art ("composition") the result would be devoid of meaning. "There may in its absence be life, incontestably, as *The Newcomes* has life, as *Les Trois Mousquetaires,* as Tolstoy's *War and Peace* have it; but what do such large loose baggy monsters, with their queer elements of the accidental and the arbitrary, artistically *mean*. . . . There is life and life, and as waste is only life sacrificed and thereby prevented from 'counting', I delight in a deep-breathing economy and an organic form."

Yet it would be wholly wrong to interpret such a statement as merely another expression of the "art for art's sake" doctrine which was so loudly articulate in James's own lifetime and to which he objected from the beginning. While James was firm in his recognition of esthetic values he was definitely not an esthete —that is to say, one for whom the means is also the end. For James even the patterns of art owe their initial suggestion to reality. Even composition depends on the existence of elements already present in life, elements capable of being drawn together with greater tightness, concentration and beauty through the artistic process. Form is not therefore something distinct from life, but the arrangement of something already there, or at least there for the artist's specially trained observation. Unlike the real esthete, James distrusted all constructions of the mind which did not derive their parallel somewhere in experience. "Never can a composition of this sort", he writes of *The Ambassadors,* "have sprung straighter from a dropped grain of suggestion, and never can that grain, developed, overgrown and smothered, have yet lurked more in the mass as an independent particle." And surely *The Ambassadors* is a good enough example of his later more complex and "geometrical" style! Whatever were the limitations of his experience his brain was never, like Mallarmé's for example, haunted by the memory of azure skies shut out, never drained of content

Comme le pot de fard gisant au pied d'un mur.

But what, since we have only mentioned them, are the elements of those patterns which life is made to assume in the imagination of the artist? Since they can be observed they must be objective; and objective patterns of human life can be built on one thing only, action. Action, to James, is therefore the "soul of the novel". All else is subordinate—description, "local color", incidental ideas, everything in fact not strictly related to the progressive explication of the central narrative core. At the same time the highest interest cannot be created by action alone, that is, action considered for its own sake. If incident is the illustration of character, character itself is the determination of incident. What is always really interesting is character and that can only be fully understood through an imaginative reconstruction of the motives that precede action in the mind. The external patterns of life—and this is commonplace enough—have significance only in so far as we are made acquainted with the complex and never to be wholly apprehended background of motives behind them.

The moment we speak of motives we are headed straight into the whole field of difficulties whose attempted solution afforded the passion of James's task as an imaginative artist. These are, in a word, all those difficulties which are set up by the necessity of the individual to adjust himself to some moral order. The most interesting patterns of art are in fact just those that the novelist is able to construct out of the often wasted, unrealized possibilities thrown up by these predicaments in life. Motives exist in all their

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

confused and multiple variety; sometimes, but rarely, they fall into design of their own accord; it is the novelist's special business to see that what is thus accidental is always achieved. His business is with the motives behind conduct because they are what make fiction, as they make life, difficult—and, so, interesting. For that reason James exclaimed at "the moral timidity of the usual English novelist, with his (or with her) aversion to face the difficulties with which on every side the treatment of reality bristles". To shun these difficulties was in fact the miss the peculiar excitement on which, in the last analysis, everything depended.

To imply solution of any absolute sort is of course to assume a standard, a criterion to which in the end all problems may be referred. Here it will have to be enough to say that by a moral order James understood some body of felt values existing through one or another process of absorption in the individual's mind. For the individual's adjustment to be imperative these values must not only exist, but exist in a strong and potent way. Without this assumption of values as something felt one cannot make the assumption of art; for one cannot otherwise account for the extreme intensity of those conflicts around which the fiction artist erects his constructions. Nor can one explain the quite real importance which these imagined conflicts take on in the reader's interest. Against some background of felt values, therefore, every individual conflict must be set; and on some such individual conflict the scheme of every novel must rest.

In these terms, plot, for example, becomes more easily definable: it is the abstract curve of the moral drama being enacted in the mind or conscience of a character. It is quantitatively all that development, growth and expansion of "the dropped grain of suggestion" which has excited in the first place the novelist's passion for difficulties. In the same way, it may be seen how esthetic values are necessarily subordinated to other values anterior to them in reality. Subordinated is perhaps hardly the word—for the two kinds of values are really so identified as to be altogether indistinguishable. The esthetic pattern *is* the moral pattern—or the beginning, middle and end of all that has taken place in the active conscience of the individual.

III

Unlike almost all of his fellow-novelists in English, James served a deliberate apprenticeship during which he learned everything he could about the nature and function of his craft. Before writing as he did write (for, once established, his style and method progressed only in refinement) he had surveyed the field, measured the hazards, and envisaged all the possible alternatives. In his own lifetime he had the opportunity to study all the later mutations of the novel-form—the English Victorians (with their "fluid puddings") and the Russians, French realism and naturalism, and two whole epochs of pure esthetic-ism. During his memorable year in France he learned so much about what the novel as novel might be that a contemporary French critic like M. Gide finds his work too much in the native tradition to captivate his taste. But he also learned, from Flaubert especially, the ultimate emptiness of even the most perfect work of art that pretended to an absolute moral indifference. From the Goncourts he learned that mere *décor*, no matter how sumptuous, was a poor substitute indeed for motivated human action. (Thus, years afterwards, writing *The Spoils of Poynton*, he avoids offering any detailed description of the furniture and other objects which are actually the source of the drama.) Most of all, from Zola he learned that art and science were two different quantities, and that art at least was a quantity that was not to be amassed through perspiration alone. Of the group as a whole his indictment is significant: "The conviction that held them together was the conviction that art and morality are

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

two perfectly different things and that the former has no more to do with the latter than it has with astronomy or embryology".

Because he had eliminated all these alternatives James may be said to have escaped all the blunders and excesses to which the novel after him was condemned. He himself could hardly have foreseen that so long after his pointed remark about Zola—"if he had as much light as energy, his results would be of the highest value"—the same process of burrowing in the dark would be resumed by Mr. Theodore Dreiser. Hardly less could he have guessed that estheticism would one day fade away into the pallid *fabliaux* of Mr. James Branch Cabell and the variegated pastiche of Mr. Thornton Wilder. But he must certainly have realized that naturalism carried far enough was bound to result in a subjectivism that should be opposed by its very nature to the traditions of an ordered art. He was certainly aware that to desert the living world of action was to descend to a region where anything resembling order was impossible. Did he not refer to impressionism like that of D'Annunzio as "the open door to the trivial"? Impressionism in our day is called by a different name but the Jamesian objection is still valid. Psychoanalysis in fiction is simply impressionism supported by a method; and impressionism in the novel has meant the same abandonment of character at the level where its possibilities for the artist are most interesting. For James as an artist, order, the assumption of order, was essential; and to submerge beneath the plane where order was possible was merely to renounce one's aspirations to the primordial chaos, to become lost in the "splendid waste".

The real difficulty in our time has of course been values. The old ones no longer capable of generating enough conviction in actual living to justify their continued representation in fiction, the new have been found uniformly insufficient. Here, it must be granted, James can hardly be expected to offer any more immediate succor than has been thus far offered by contemporary life. But as he has already revealed the necessity and the exact function of values in narrative art he can now do much to prevent a certain confusion in regard to the novelist's proper relation to them.

Nothing in James's own example or declaration, let it be said, allows us to understand that it is ever the business of the novelist to establish values. As he assumed them from the society of the period in which he lived, so must those who follow after him in the path of the novel assume them from the moral consciousness of their own time. The contemporary writer can only hope to discover in the complex welter of our time those standards of judgment which emerge with sufficient strength and frequency to stand the test of being submitted to the artistic process. He must search, observe, experiment, and then make his test with the almost certain prospect of defeat for a considerable time to come. It may be that for some years he will have to be content to operate without nearly so cohesive a body of felt values as obtained in the past. He may be compelled to devote himself to the rapid atrophy and decline of those values in the present; to the issues caused by their dramatic refusal to be displaced; or to the equally dramatic effort of those new values which shall gradually assert themselves in the future. Any one of these courses would be more truly creative, according to the Jamesian point of view, than the blind appropriation of values which are no longer felt because they are no longer sufficiently alive.

IV

What the writers of our time can learn from James is not anything distinctly represented in his achievement; nothing implicit in his style or method, which are both too personal ever to be duplicated; not his "philosophy", not even the assumptions about hu-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

man character which were for him the source of so much eloquence. What they can learn from him is the deepest meaning of the phrase "the integrity of the artist". He can show them to what an essential degree the artist is dependent on something anterior to himself in life; how the truest values of art are never to be dissociated from the most potent values of the world about him; and how, although the particular values of the one are always in one sense relative to those of the other, the single constant in the whole relationship is the fact of the artistic impulse. And as a last check on the possible interpretation that all this implies a certain dangerous relativity of values for art, he has written: "There is one point at which the moral sense and the artistic sense lie very close together; that is in the light of the very obvious truth that the deepest quality of a work of art will always be the quality of the mind of the producer . . . that seems to me an axiom which, for the artist in fiction, will cover all needful moral ground".

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE UBIQUITOUS PLAGIARIST

by Eudora Ramsay Richardson

RECENT accusations of plagiarism, and current stories of professionals who examine books and plays for the purpose of detecting similarities to other published work and of inciting authors to sue, have doubtless been looked upon by many as a result of the modern commercialization of literature. The makers of stories, however, are the only people who can claim greater antiquity for their antecedents than the plagiarists. The first man who told a good yarn to friends gathered at the entrance of his cave undoubtedly discovered later that the product of his brain had been appropriated by one of his listeners and amended without sanction of the author. The face-slapping incident that involved Mr. Lewis and Mr. Dreiser, the case of Lewys vs. O'Neill with its happily unfortunate outcome for Miss Lewys, and Miss Anne Nichols's experience with *The Cohens and the Kelleys*, might have taken place in any of the literary ages that have elapsed since books were written and plays were produced —though in the latter instance the defendant, of course, would hardly have been a motion picture corporation.

Dramatists have never been able adequately to protect their property. Elizabethan publishers unblushingly practised the theft of plays from producers with no thought that either apology or explanation was necessary. Sheridan's *The School for Scandal* appeared in print transcribed from an incorrect stenographic copy. George Sand was not annoyed by her own conscience or by fear of public disapproval when she translated *As You Like It* with no one's permission and married Jacques to Celia. The French used to steal their plays from Spain, the English from France, and the Americans from England. In 1781 Thomas Southerne put *Oroonoko* on the stage with no mention of the celebrated Mrs. Aphra Behn.

Judge Learned Hand's seemingly amazing decision that terminated Miss Nichols's suit is well entrenched in precedent:

> "If *Twelfth Night* was copyrighted," said Judge Hand, "it is quite possible that a second comer might so closely imitate Sir Toby Belch or Malvolio as to infringe, but it would not be enough that for one of the characters he cast a riotous knight who kept wassail to the discomfort of the household or a vain, foppish steward who became amorous of his mistress. These would be no more than Shakespeare's ideas in the play, as little capable of monopoly as Einstein's doctrine of relativity or Darwin's theory of the mutation of the species."

In 1768 Judge Yates in England rendered a decision worthy of being claimed as the ancestor of Judge Hand's. "Ideas", said Judge Yates, "cannot be the object of property: they are not visible, tangible, or corporeal." In America a similar instance often cited concerns the story of Tammany Hall written by one Mr. Myers, the substance of which later appeared serially in a newspaper. The

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

court held that the defendants were entitled to take the facts from the book if different language was used. In 1888 a rival version of *Little Lord Fauntleroy* appeared in England. Mrs. Burnett's lawyer was clever enough to base his suit upon the use of passages from the original and won his case. H. M. Paull, in his scholarly work, *Literary Ethics*, published in 1929, spoke with prophetic accuracy when he said that "it still seems doubtful whether a plot may not be taken and a new play written in different words". Rare has been the case such as the one involving Miss Nichols and the motion picture producers that has been decided in favor of the plaintiff. Dickens tried hard to prevent the unauthorized dramatization of his work. Finally, giving up in despair, he said, "It is better to suffer a great wrong than to have recourse to the much greater wrong of the law".

The failure of the courts to render decisions favorable to plaintiffs, while working individual hardships here and there, proves on the whole to be protection to authors. There was, for instance, no reason for Eugene O'Neill to become agitated when Miss Georges Lewys demanded damages for alleged similarities between *Strange Interlude* and her book *The Temple of Athena*. It was, we imagine, with perfect equanimity that O'Neill sent his cabled answer saying that he had never even heard the book mentioned and that the person accusing him of plagiarism must be crazy. Indeed the professionals who incite authors to sue each other would find their racket unprofitable if the majority of cases were not settled out of court to avoid the expense of litigation. It is fairly well known that Belasco, who never compromised a case and who never settled out of court when accused of having been party to the borrowing of plots or ideas, estimated that through his long career he had spent more than $100,000 for his acquittals. Despite the copyright law of 1909, plagiarism, real or merely alleged, has changed little through the centuries.

The obscure person who lifted a story of Thomas Nelson Page's from *Scribner's Magazine* and succeeded in having it published elsewhere under his name, and the enterprising young people who have recently won prizes with stories once the property of O. Henry, are stealing in a manner fortified by tradition. The Greeks were guilty of the sort of plagiarism that would now involve authors in lawsuits. The Romans took their plays from the older seat of culture. When accused of borrowing from Ennius, Virgil replied that he had merely picked pearls from a dunghill.

English writers have been content to use what has been written by their predecessors, changing for better or for worse and adding thereto according to their ability. *Beowulf* was composed by many scops who did not acknowledge the authorship of their predecessors. Caedmon and Orm found it easier to base their work upon the Scriptures than to create new themes. King Alfred gathered his historical material largely from Orosius and his philosophy from Boethius. Layamon's *Brut* was an expansion of Wace's, and Sir John Mandeville used other people's travels in such a way that they were thought to be his own. The mythical William Langland, father of *Piers the Plowman*, had his imitators, including the authors of *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *The Shephearde's Calendar*.

Chaucer, with all his ability to photograph the life and characters of fourteenth-century England, used French models during the first part of his career and Italian during the second, and borrowed unblushingly from Dante and Boccaccio. *The Canterbury Tales* themselves are, of course, far from original, and the plan upon which they were built came from *The Decameron*, in which nobles of Florence, fleeing from the plague, amuse themselves by telling stories to each other.

If there were left only the work concerning which no charges of plagiarism could be brought, English literature would be greatly impoverished. The Arthuriad and Shake-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

speare appear to furnish justification for the sort of borrowing that is today violently condemned by writers and upheld by the courts. Malory collected the material for his *Morte D'Arthur* and, of course, created almost none of it. The authors of the subsequent Arthurian literature, which reached its highest peak of excellence in the work of Tennyson and Swinburne, stood on the shoulders of their predecessors, each adding to the richness of the legends that have entered into the warp and woof of English life.

Shakespeare made no apology for borrowing plots and characters or for adopting the blank verse which Marlowe had proved to be an effective vehicle for carrying the drama, because all Elizabethans stole right and left without compunction. There was certainly no particularly reason to give Arthur Brooke credit for the Montagu and Capulet story when his metrical romance was founded upon Boisteau's French translation of Bandello's story, which in turn had merely told an old Italian tale. Since Lodge took his *Rosalinde* from Chaucer's *Tale of Gamelyn*, he could not complain when Shakespeare used the story in *As You Like It*. Though Shakespeare took *All's Well That Ends Well* from *The Palace of Pleasure*, he probably knew that Paynter had found the story in *The Decameron*. It was scarcely necessary to credit Chaucer with *Troilus and Cressida* when Chaucer had taken his version from Caxton's publication of *The Destruction of Troy*. That many of the plays, probably at the suggestion of the producer, were recast from old ones which had proved popular constituted so usual a procedure as to require no explanation. If only wholly original material were to be allowed on library shelves, Shakespeare and the Arthuriad would have to be junked.

Through the literary era that followed the Elizabethan plagiarism continued to flourish. Milton, though protesting against borrowing, practised it, claiming sophistically that only the author who does not beautify what he takes is a "plagiary". It is likely that Dryden thought his adaptations of Shakespearean plays and his remodelling of *Paradise Lost* improvements upon the originals. He acknowledged, moreover, that his *Mock Astrologer* was founded upon Corneille's *Le Feint Astrologue*, which in turn had been taken from *Fingido* of Calderón. Yet he was silent when accused truthfully of having pilfered whole scenes from Molière. Indeed a doctor's thesis has been written on the influence of Corneille and Racine upon English literature and another on the lines from Catullus to be found in English poetry. During the Age of Romanticism, Rousseau and Diderot were outrageously copied in England. The imitators of Butler's *Hudibras* were legion, and the seventeenth-century lyrists were continually copying each other. Sterne lifted whole chapters here and there. Byron, though admitting that he cribbed and though pointing out the borrowings of Scott, was furious when the *Literary Gazette* accused him of using the words and ideas of others. Plagiarism was proved against Mr. Isaac Disraeli, whose son Lord Beaconsfield followed in his father's footsteps. Many of the principles Ruskin expounded were taken bodily from Carlyle. The plot of Owen Meredith's *Lucile* has its source in George Sand's *Lavinia*. One of Jeremy Taylor's published sermons has a verbatim Portuguese original. A verse from *An Epitaph from Camden's Remains* appears materially unchanged in Burns's *A Joyful Widower*.

The forerunners of the English novel were generously supplied by the pastoral romance developed from Theocritus by Boccaccio and Ariosto, by the realistic stories of the Italian *novelle*, and by the picaresque story of Spanish origin. Mrs. Aphra Behn, long thought to be the creator of the realistic novel, has been shown by Mr. Ernest Bernbaum to have secured her *first hand* material for *Oroonoko* from a pamphlet published in 1667 entitled *An Impartial Description of Surinam*.

Though Samuel Richardson cannot be

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

deprived of the honor of having started the English novel upon its varied career, he is not the creator of the epistolary form, which had been in vogue since the seventeenth century and of which there were such notable examples as *Two Hundred and Eleven Sociable Letters* published in 1664 by Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle, and *Letters of a Portuguese Gentleman* which appeared in 1678. Because of its popularity Fielding, Sterne, and Smollett unhesitatingly adopted the form. Horace Walpole, in devising the Gothic Romance, was merely reflecting the spirit of his time, which was expressing itself in an inordinate interest in all things medieval. The Gothic craze that followed is evidence of the quality motivating English literature—an apishness which has filled books with Rabelaisian matter and which has sent writers scurrying in the wake of James Joyce.

On the Continent, moreover, the literary conscience did not achieve an early state of high development. Molière, whether or not he ever made the classic admission attributed to him, was not the only Continental who took his own where he found it. For pillaging Plautus the playwright may be forgiven, but he would be put to it to justify taking a scene almost word for word from *Cyrano de Bergerac* for his *Les Fourberies de Scapin*. Voltaire, in answering his accusers, pled that he was merely following the example of the masters. Dumas vehemently defended his borrowings.

The slow awakening of the literary conscience expressed itself first in the author's resentment toward other writers who had borrowed from his work. According to Mr. G. H. Putnam, there was no such thing as literary property until after the invention of printing, and of course in England until the worthy Mr. Caxton set up his press at Almonry near Westminster Abbey. The word plagiarism or plagiary, derived from *plagium* and originally meaning slave-stealing, was not used in England with its present connotation until the latter part of the sixteenth century, when Elizabethans began to make accusations right and left against their fellow craftsmen. It was fortunate for posterity that all the tempests were in teapots and that Shakespeare was not sufficiently perturbed to abandon the method that had proved successful. There was no evidence that he took to heart Robert Greene's caustic words in *Groatsworth of Wit* which dubbed him "the upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his Tyger's heart wrapped in a player's hide, supposes that he is as well able to bumbast out a blank verse as the best of you; and being an absolute *Johannes factotum*, is in his own conceit the only Shakescene in a countrie". Chettle, who published Greene's book posthumously, regrets in a preface to a later book that he did not strike out the passages that had given offence to two or three writers and, in such words as to leave no doubt that he was referring to Shakespeare, and that the great playwright had dealt courteously with the publisher of *Groatsworth of Wit*, pays a glowing tribute to one of the men who had been the object of Greene's abuse. When R. B., author of *Greene's Funeralls*, further accuses the man that eclipsed Greene's fame of purloining his plumes and asks if they can "deny the same", Shakespeare seems to have left the question unanswered. As evidence of his complete indifference to the charge came *The Winter's Tale* with one of Greene's plays as its source.

Ben Jonson, while advocating slavish imitation of the ancients, finds plagiarism of contemporary writers exceedingly distressing. He may or may not have been referring to Shakespeare when he wrote

> Poor Poet-Ape that would be thought our chief,
> Whose words are e'en the frippery of wit,
> From brokage is become so bold a thief,
> As we, the robb'd, leave rage and pity him.

Yet, it was probably in a spirit of fun that Shakespeare, who had cast to the wind the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with that which has been derived from an outside source and constitutes the sort of plagiarism that makes great literature. Only the person who is unfamiliar with books has a subconscious mind that is not stored with material that has already served the uses of other writers. Yet a good subconscious that has handled ideas long enough emits them in forms that their parents can scarcely recognize. Though it is well enough for reviewers to do a bit of sleuthing, the final verdict is to be given by future generations, for, in the words of Jules Lemaître, "Criticism of our contemporaries is not criticism; it is conversation". For the real plagiarist there will be oblivion; for the authors who have had something to contribute to thought and beauty, whether or not its basis is wholly original, there will be life eternal.

Fortunately, the public is not greatly interested in the foot-notes that give credit where credit is due, even if it were possible to list all the sources from which redigested material was obtained. In a general way I know, for instance, that I am indebted for the facts used in this essay to *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, to H. M. Paull's *Literary Ethics*, to articles written long ago and unearthed with the help of a periodical index, to various college text-books, the names and authors of which I have forgotten, to Annette Brown Hopkins and Sarah Hard Hughes, who wrote a preface to a collection of excerpts from the work of pre-nineteenth-century novelists, to instructors under whom I sat in college, and to Professors A. H. Thorndike, Brander Matthews, Trent, Wright, Cunliffe, and Krapp, either formerly or still of the graduate department at Columbia University. Yet I cannot now separate the chemical mixture into its components and assign the parts to their respective sources. It is comforting, however, to believe that the great are not as jealous of their ideas as the small or of the facts they have helped humble students to unearth.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Greek unities so dear to Jonson and who had bothered not at all to originate plots, wrote in his quiet latter years *The Tempest*, based, not upon some other work, but upon the shipwreck of Sir George Somers's ships off the Bermudas, and adhered strictly to the Greek form. It was his way of telling Jonson that he could do it if he wanted to, and better than anyone else.

As time went on, plagiarism was more frequently discussed but practised no less. Samuel Butler, for instance, saw fit to write his *Apology for Plagiaries*; Mrs. Aphra Behn took occasion in a letter to a friend to defend herself by declaring that she had served Marlowe, from whom she had borrowed, by bettering his passages; and Pope, like Milton, rendered serious dissertations upon the value of appropriating what has been written and improving it. It is amusing, however, that Pope, while justifying himself, upbraided others for borrowing. Through the nineteenth century plagiarism continued, and writers became more and more violent in condemning it.

The late birth of literary criticism in England is probably largely responsible for the early plagiarists going scot-free. Dryden has the distinction of being the first formal critic, and the Elizabethans introduced the incidental criticism of which Ben Jonson's prefaces are the fruition. The earliest critics, however, were too busy emphasizing the moral value of literature, dealing with purely technical matters, extolling the ancients, and discussing rhyme to treat of the larger aspects of literature. Now, however, the plagiarists may escape the judge but not the book reviewer, who is paid by the word and who pads his column by pointing out the influence of other writers and the sources of words, ideas, and phrases. It is hardly likely that Thornton Wilder thought that his almost identical descriptions of old sea captains in *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* and in *The Woman of Andros* would pass unnoticed by the vultures waiting to pounce upon the book that followed his unprecedented success. The prolific Madame de Genlis, who in the eighteenth century could with impunity republish her old books under new titles, would never escape discovery now.

The real plagiarist is invariably caught and dealt with fairly by the court of public opinion. To the writer who thinks first of his art, the verdict is satisfactory. The howling is being done, moreover, by the writer who fears that someone else is making money out of an idea that it might occur to him later to capitalize. Stories of fabulous wealth made by a few books when dramatized for the screen are responsible for much of the excitement. The literary artist has never been hurt by the plagiarist, for literature that has seen the light of print cannot be successfully stolen. Dryden did not injure Shakespeare when he revised *Antony and Cleopatra* and called it *All for Love*, nor did George Sand when she joined Jacques and Cécile in holy matrimony.

After all, the story is not the thing. It matters little where an author gets his plot-idea, but what he does with the story after he gets it is important. Though we may deplore a motion picture producer's theft of a theme that will make money for him, we shall have to admit that the problem lies outside the domain of literature. Though Shakespeare took his plots from North's *Plutarch*, from Holinshed's *Chronicle*, from plays that had been produced in London, from Lodge, from Brooke, from Chaucer, and from Boccaccio, he was not a plagiarist, for by subtle alchemy ideas passed through him and were converted into gold that was his own. A writer must take his own where he finds it. If he possesses the spark, the finished product will be his. If he does not, the metal he produces will not withstand the fires of posterity. In the final analysis there is plagiarism in everything that is written. The idea, however, that has passed through the consciousness of the author takes the form of a chemical and not a physical mixture of the author's personality

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

HUMANISM AND MODERN CHINA

by K. T. Mei

EDITOR'S NOTE:—*Americans have been told often enough in recent years of the influence in China of Occidental apostles of "progress", "science", "democracy", etc., such as John Dewey and Bertrand Russell. Little is known of the efforts being made to counteract this westernizing of the most ancient and stable of civilizations. It was inevitable that young Chinese alive to the shortcomings of western culture should find inspiration for their task of preserving the best of traditional China in the work of Irving Babbitt, widely recognized as the most searching critic of our society. The author of the following account of Professor Babbitt's growing influence in China, at present an instructor at Harvard, was a founder of the Peking "Critical Review", described in his text.*

IN HIS *Le Mouvement Humaniste aux Etats-Unis* Professor Mercier says that the work of Professor Babbitt is very much followed in China. The purpose of the present article is partly to confirm Professor Mercier's observation and partly to tell what a Chinese movement, similar in many ways to the humanist movement led by Babbitt and More in this country, has been attempting to do.

As long as fifteen years ago, Professor Babbitt's classes began to attract serious attention from some of the Chinese students then pursuing advanced work in philosophy and literature at Harvard. These Chinese were perhaps among the first to recognize Babbitt and More as the two "master-critics of modern life", belonging to the great company of Goethe and Matthew Arnold and pointing out with equal authority and unanswerableness the "malady of the age". It is these same scholars who on their return to China have made themselves the interpreters of the two American critics to the Chinese reading public. The beginning of this Chinese advocacy of humanism anticipated by something like half a dozen years the efforts of its followers in America and in Europe who have lately been pushing it to the forefront as an intellectual and cultural movement of true significance.

Because of the local and specific conditions and problems it has to deal with, the Chinese movement necessarily cannot accept the whole program of the American humanists. It has not, through a lack of inventiveness or some other cause, even provided itself with a name or a set of catchwords. But in respect to many fundamental ideas and doctrines, the humanist movement in America is a very important source of reference and inspiration for the similar movement in China. Therefore, a statement of the nature of the influence that the American humanists have exerted upon their Chinese pupils, an inquiry into the Chinese intellectual conditions that have called forth such a movement, and finally a brief review of the work that this movement has accomplished and failed to accomplish, together with a suggestion or two for the possible direction it may take in its further development, may not be un-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

welcome to those who are keenly interested in the future of civilization, not only in the Western Hemisphere or in China, but in the world as a whole.

Owing to the unprecedented cultural transformation that is taking place in China, the Chinese of the present generation, or at least the more serious portion of it, are suffering from a mental vacuity and spiritual bewilderment unknown to the rest of the world. Compared with this Chinese generation, the post-war generation of the West is one that is lapping its soul in Elysium, despite its much-vaunted despair and melancholy. The long series of national disasters inflicted upon China by the Western Powers in the middle and second half of the last century and the subsequent revolutionary agitation and activity of her own leaders have worked together to discredit the cultural heritage and to undermine the national self-assurance of the Chinese. Their hoary sanctities in social policy and individual conduct, and finally even in letters and arts, have suddenly become meaningless. The change in the Chinese outlook upon life is abrupt and unexampled. And this change naturally has a more tragic character than is usually the case, since China was heretofore pre-eminently a conservative country where reverence for antiquity and dependence upon constituted authority in both the family and the state were elevated to the status of religion, and where the people are ill prepared for quick initiative and readjustment in the face of strange emergencies. Inevitably they turn to the West for light and leading, inasmuch as the impact of the West has been responsible for their sudden emancipation from ancestral control and guidance. And what do they find in the West? The widespread political incompetence, the social unrest, the intellectual confusion, and the spiritual anarchy cannot escape any careful observer even from a "backward" country. The supposedly golden age of democracy and science and efficiency and progress culminated in the World War.

Presumably the initiators of the Chinese movement had during their sojourn as students in this country gone through the modern prophets from Rousseau down, and listened attentively to these spiritual physicians for diagnoses and proposed remedies. They had, however, found the diagnoses conflicting and superficial and the proposed remedies dubious. These modern prophets demanded either more democracy instead of better democracy, more science instead of better science, or more liberty and individualism instead of better liberty and individualism. Their radicalism was, in fact, not a radical departure from the drift of modern thought and culture during the last two centuries. They were gyrating with the rest of the world in a vicious circle. Meanwhile, these Chinese scholars, wandering from one American university to another, after their wont, had also presumably inspected and tasted the conventional bill of fare offered by the academic curricula, but felt their assiduous pilgrimage rewarded only with more uncertainties and disquietude.

These Chinese Argonauts might just as well have stayed home if all they were to find was such illusory intellectual enlightenment. So their discovery of Professor Babbitt and Mr. More was a capital event in their lives. One can still recall their exultation when they came upon the three volumes Babbitt had then published, and their still greater enthusiasm when they attended his lectures. Just the other day, a younger Chinese pupil of his confessed in public that *Rousseau and Romanticism* was a revelation to him about ten years ago, when he felt the essential puerility and unsoundness of many of the novel ideas imported and advocated by the leaders of the so-called "Chinese Renaissance", then in its heyday, but without being able to explain the ground of his aversion. For the last fifteen years or so few Chinese who have come to Harvard for literary and philosophical studies have not sat in Babbitt's classes, and the number of his

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Chinese pupils, though still very small, has been steadily increasing.

The secret of the strong hold that this critic and thinker has upon his Chinese disciples—and indeed upon many of the post-war generation at home and in Europe—is not difficult to explain. His is the antidote to almost all the current types of Occidental thinking. These types all claim, in the magic name of change and progress, to guide men to a higher and brighter plane of living, but, paradoxically enough, hurl them straight into black abysses of despair and frustration. Defeatism seems today at once a pose of spiritual distinction and the genuine expression of a spiritual dilemma. This doctrine of change and progress has recoiled upon itself. For satiety and disgust with the merely novel is an unchanged, and perhaps unchangeable, psychological fact. And if man is perpetually told to deny his own past and place no confidence in what he has achieved, what meaning and purpose can life offer him in the future?

The broad historical perspective in Professor Babbitt's world of ideas and values is a great liberalizing influence. It frees you from the shackles of a narrow contemporaneity. It ignores the arbitrary division of Western cultural history into periods, with all the honors to the latest. There are in his world only great individuals scattered rather thinly through the ages, and these great individuals are not only contemporaries of one another but of all time. Genius is, in the current sense of the word progress, unprogressive. This view is clearly at variance with the modern sociological dogma which recognizes in great men no transcendent ability to rise above the local and temporary.

Again, what interests the Chinese in Professor Babbitt's work is its ecumenical sweep. Babbitt and More are perhaps the first writers to conceive of the seemingly divergent cultures of the East and the West as essentially a unity. Babbitt's profound understanding of Confucius and his masterly comparison of Confucius with Aristotle easily put him at the head of all Occidental scholars who have written on the Chinese sage. And this he has done without a direct access to the Chinese sources. One would like to imagine what Confucian humanism as continually enriched and vivified by the personal exemplifications and the accumulated experience of the Chinese race during the post-Confucian periods would mean to Professor Babbitt, were the whole repository of Chinese literature and philosophy of these periods directly accessible to him.

The charge of reaction often brought against Babbitt and More, because they are mainly occupied with the championship and rehabilitation of the world's sages, has its origin in modern intellectual provincialism. The conception of the modern epoch as but one of the stages in the march of Western culture and of Western culture as but a part of the world culture seems to be the only possible sane view, except to those whose mental horizons extend scarcely beyond the limits of one or two centuries or beyond the boundaries of the Western Hemisphere. In their attempts to enlarge the modern vision, Babbitt and More are true radicals, in the sense that they are for a thorough revision of the fundamentals of modern life. For they aim at nothing less than the "transvaluation of all values", as the modernists understand these values, and the complete overthrow of a number of basic assumptions and postulates to which modern men unanimously subscribe. They require in the modernist a mental metamorphosis most humiliating to his personal pride and most painful to his ingrained habits. The doctrines of these two writers are as subversive of modern life as the Copernican theory was of medieval cosmography. They are the avowed disturbers of the status quo and the equilibrium of modern life. Viewed historically, the position of More and Babbitt may be called that of the liberal conservative, since their main purpose is to bring the errant men of today

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

back to the path followed by the sages of the past, or, in Professor Babbitt's words, "to oppose to the wisdom of the age the wisdom of the ages". But in the present war of ideas involving the whole problem of modern civilization, they are the peace-breaking insurgents, while the radicals of the current type, the accredited spokesmen of the age, are the complacent and peace-loving mandarins with all the constituted authority and popular support behind them.

Nor do these two writers fare better in the groves of academe, though their views appear at first sight surprisingly academic and though they are often dismissed with a sneer by the young lions of the press as ex cathedra critics of the tradition-bound universities. Their presence in these supposedly charmed circles is somewhat deceptive. In university departments of literature, the entrenched philological régime has long seized for itself the place which should belong to humane scholarship, and it has more than a clandestine liaison with the popular literary radicals both inside and outside the academic walls. This régime is preoccupied with a type of research which is often more scientific and sociological than literary. It has little sympathy for critical work that demands a rare combination of literary sensibility and philosophical insight. It was something like a fashion during the war to attack the Germanized method and spirit of American literary scholarship, and to write against it has become increasingly easier since the war. But the laurels must go to Professor Babbitt for being the man who more than twenty years ago in his *Literature and the American College* fired the first gun.

Perhaps none can better appraise than their Chinese pupils the qualities just mentioned. Chinese youths are ever eager to be disciples. In Professor Babbitt they find a teacher having much in common with the long line of Chinese philosophical and literary dictators and great statesmen who compel reverence and loyalty through overwhelming personal force. The personality of Professor Babbitt has undoubtedly that magic touch without which no man can acquire disciples. His Olympian disdain, his Johnsonian domination and pugnacity, and his utter indifference to the worldly consequences of his opinions are spiritual traits dear and fascinating to the nobler side of the Chinese temper. He has brought much emotion to his battle against the romantic cult of the emotions. He is not the fastidious and sensitive bookman, a familiar figure in academic circles, who instinctively recoils from the repugnant vulgarities of common life, but who is really too gentle and innocuous to give anybody alarm. Nor is he the research specialist whose startling conclusions on some remote problems may ripple the academic backwater for a moment. Nor again is he the cloister philosopher who builds up a pet system of thought with much ingenuity but without reference to the rough-and-tumble of everyday existence. Rather, he is intensely practical and passionately concerned with the immediate effectiveness of his doctrines.

After all, the measure of a great teacher is in his ability to help his pupils discover themselves. The critical estimation of Confucian humanism by Babbitt has in a sense shown his Chinese pupils what the world status of Chinese culture is. They feel themselves correctly orientated amidst a weltering diversity of cultural values and claims of today. Partly as a result of his influence, his pupils have a new approach to their native cultural background—an approach based on a more critical attitude and technique than before. But the upshot of this critical approach is not, as with so many young Chinese intellectuals, a strengthening of their apostasy, but a reaffirmation of their faith. The prevailing allegation of the backwardness of Chinese civilization, as contrasted with modern Western civilization with its manifold spectacular achievements through the instrumentality of natural and social sciences, is now seen to be pointless and irrelevant. The con-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

trast is undeniable, but the points of similarity are more undeniable, especially if the two civilizations are adjudged historically and with reference to the great spiritual leaders that both have produced through the ages. The Chinese for a generation have been showing an ever-deepening sense of embarrassment, because they have found themselves old-fashioned and laggard in a world of energetic and nimble-footed moderns, and meanwhile have been indulging themselves in a furious orgy of iconoclasm and innovation in order to catch up with the rest of the world. They do not seem in the least aware that they are doing this at the risk of sacrificing their cultural identity and independence and becoming at best imitation Europeans and Americans, thus making themselves really inferior and ridiculous. Why can they not retain some of the mellowed poise and detachment and self-confidence that should be theirs by right of inheritance?

It is amazing how the Chinese have within one generation turned from extreme conservatism to extreme radicalism. With the possible exception of Soviet Russia, China is the most untraditional country on the globe today. There is evident on her part neither the inclination nor the capability to coordinate what she conceives to be modern Western civilization with her own past; in other words, to achieve through the application of high critical intelligence a wise synthesis between the old and the new. Her Westernized intellectuals, who are the predominant factor in her education and politics and thought, are foreigners at home, with an entire lack of comprehension and love of their spiritual fatherland. The imposing edifice of modern Western civilization that was erected by the redundant and oftentimes misdirected energies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, particularly the nineteenth, is now found to be threatened with collapse by some of its own thinkers. But the Chinese of this generation are eager to cut one another's throats in their attempt to erect an edifice of the same kind. For many years to come China is likely to be the dumping ground for all the routine banalities and dubious ideologies of the West, as she is already one for its surplus commercial products.

In general, the Chinese who have acquiesced in the new dispensation may be divided into two categories. First, the unreflective crowd who, either blessed with the herd instinct or animated by a raw conception of life as merely a chance to exploit to their best wordly advantage whatever happens to be in the wind, have become disdainful of their ancestors and taken over without compunction and dispute the current official philosophy of the West at its face value, with democracy and science and efficiency and progress as its chief ingredients. The size of this group is daily augmented by graduates from the new-fangled schools and colleges, with the missionary institutions, largely under American auspices, contributing a generous quota. The more enterprising of this group, in order to make their Westernization more authentic and authoritative, in order to round it out, come to institutions of higher learning in America, which more than any other modern Western nation is the siren inspirer of the efforts of these Chinese to modernize themselves. These Chinese on their return look upon themselves as the ordained priests of the gospel of Westernization. And what they mean by the gospel of Westernization is of course nothing but exactly that idea of "middle class liberalism" which Matthew Arnold so insinuatingly ridiculed half a century ago. Mr. Nathaniel Peffer, in a recent article in *Harpers*, spoke of a Chinese who would tear down the beautiful old shrines and residences around the famous West Lake, China's national garden, unrivalled in historical and artistic associations, and put up in their place "New Jersey factory buildings". He and his kind are now omnipresent—in factories, in banking houses,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in government offices, and in academic halls; and the whole Chinese atmosphere is resonant with their "plans for development". They are the Chinese counterparts of the captains of industry and commerce, the politicians, the Rotarians, and the various types of uplifters who constitute so numerous and powerful a portion of contemporary American society.

The men of the second category differ from those of the first in superior intelligence and in the ability to account rationally for the radical changes now going on in Chinese life and to keep themselves abreast of certain types of contemporary Occidental thinking. They may be called the intellectual wing of the Chinese movement for Westernization. They are willing not only to accept the whole program of the first group, but to go much further. They are vigorously employed in effecting not only particular political and social reforms, but a total cultural revolution. Chiefly under the leadership of such clever and up-to-the-minute modernists as Dr. Hu Shih, they are working towards such an uncompromising Westernization of Chinese life and thought that it is in danger of proving itself not a "Chinese Renaissance", as it is often claimed to be, but a "Chinese Suicide".

It should not be expected that all Chinese can find enough nutriment in such a thin intellectual diet. To be sure, the West can contribute a variety of intellectual and cultural elements to the making of the new China, and as such these elements should be freely welcomed and assimilated, provided they are not too alien to the best traditions that through the test of time have gone to compose the very marrow of the Chinese national *ethos*. Western civilization has without doubt a slowly and painfully accumulated background of its own. It cannot be regarded as the exclusive creation of the efforts of science and democracy in the last two centuries or so, however splendid and fruitful these efforts may have been. Nor can the West even in its modern manner be truly apprehended and interpreted by its Chinese sponsors, who ignore and depreciate the value of its antecedent achievements. Nor can those of the Chinese who have any awareness of their native background fail to see the incompatibility between modern Western culture thus incompletely and distortedly presented and Chinese culture as a historical entity. It is the Chinese who have felt their countrymen defrauded of their priceless cultural heritage and who in some cases have been influenced by the American humanists, who have risen to face the threat of cultural suicide in modern China.

Like the American humanists, the sponsors of the Chinese movement are for the most part university men. Their chief literary organ is *The Critical Review*, a monthly Chinese journal, which made its first appearance early in 1922. It has been under the editorial management of Mr. Mi Wu, professor at Tsing Hua University, Peking. He is the most indefatigable and devoted worker for the cause. In the last two years, as added proof of his extraordinary energy, he has taken over the editorial duties of the weekly Literary Supplement to the *Ta Kung Pao* of Tientsin, generally conceded to be the best Chinese daily. The third publication of the group, *The Chinese Historical Review*, has for its editor the veteran writer and historical scholar, Mr. Liu Yi-cheng, at present Director of the National Library at Nanking. Others, associates or pupils of the two named, have also been giving effective aid to the movement. It is noteworthy that those of the group, like Mr. Liu, who may be considered the indigenous products of purely Chinese disciplines, have found themselves fundamentally agreed with the immediate disciples of Babbitt—a fact that indicates the world-wide appeal of the humanist position taken by the American critics as well as the essential unity of Eastern and Western cultures viewed in their totality.

The declaration of principles by this

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Chinese group may be read in the opening pages of any issue of *The Critical Review*. I take verbatim the English version of this declaration: (1) To interpret the spirit and systematize the materials of Chinese culture; (2) to introduce and assimilate the standard works and best ideas of Western philosophy and literature; (3) to discuss the current problems of Chinese life, thought, and education with a sane, intelligent, and critical attitude; and (4) to create a modern Chinese prose style, capable of expressing new ideas and sentiments, yet retaining the traditional usage and inherent beauty of the language. This literary program sounds moderate and uncontroversial enough. But in a country like China at the present, where moderation is a lost virtue, it is taken as a counsel either of excessive timidity or of hide-bound reaction.

If I am not mistaken, the founders of *The Critical Review* must have regarded as their central purpose the defense of the Chinese tradition. A preoccupation with the defects of this tradition and an advocacy of a cheap and unselective cosmopolitanism as its substitute have been the two outstanding characteristics of the radical intellectual movement in modern China. It was high time even in 1922 for a courageous reaction from this movement which had, in the popular rôle of the *advocatus diaboli*, torn away the last shred of national self-respect and self-confidence and plunged the modern Chinese into a shoreless sea of unmitigated self-condemnation. While not unmindful of the many and grave defects of their national tradition, the writers for *The Critical Review* are convinced that the more urgent task, at least for the moment, is rather a reconsideration of its achieved merits in order to restore to the modern Chinese a measure of balance and self-possession which these writers believe to be the prerequisites not only for a genuine cultural renaissance, but for a judicious reception of whatever advantageous and assimilable things Western culture may have to offer to China.

More specifically, the position, either explicit or implied, of *The Critical Review*, that the best elements in the native tradition are the only sound basis for the building up of the new China, may be summed up as idealistic in philosophy, politics, and education, and classicist in literature. This is tantamount to saying that its position is Confucian, though it does not so much as declare for a Confucian movement. All cultural battles in China today must, in fact, hinge upon the attitudes of the differing camps towards Confucius, since he has been the fountain-head of virtually all the intellectual and spiritual streams for twenty-five centuries or so, and he is still the paramount influence among millions of Chinese, whether they are conscious of it or not, despite the work of the anti-Confucian modernists who just now have the cry.

As the leaders of the Chinese movement are primarily men of letters and, like the American humanists, very much concerned with the ethical basis and import of literature as an expression and a way of life, they have made themselves the upholders of the classical school of Chinese literature against the extreme views and tendencies championed by the leaders of the so-called "Literary Revolution". Here again Professor Babbitt may find ample confirmation and reinforcement of his doctrines, inasmuch as Chinese classicism is in many respects strikingly similar to European classicism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. As founded by Han Yü (768-824), the Dryden or Boileau of China, this school takes as its philosophical and literary models the Confucian classics. (Hence its name, Ku Wen,* meaning "ancient literature".) Its fundamental tenets are closely parallel to those of the European classical school: imitation, restraint, and above all the doctrine that "literature is to convey

* A French scholar, M. Georges Margouliès, has the distinction of being the first in the Occident to publish a book on this very important subject of Chinese literature. See his "Le Kou Wen Chinois." Paris, 1926.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

truths."* The recognized masters of this school, from Han Yü to Tseng Kuo-fan (1811-72), the famous suppressor of the Tai Ping Rebellion, are not only great writers, but often great moralists, great statesmen, or great soldiers; and Tseng Kuo-fan was, in fact, all these combined—a case perhaps without parallel in modern times. Chinese classicists of this magnitude have realized to a fuller extent perhaps than the great writers of any other country the Confucian dictum that the "superior man is not a utensil"; in other words, he should have an all-round culture.

What is just said is necessarily too summary a statement to do ample justice to the philosophical and literary problems involved in the Chinese tradition. I hope it may, nevertheless, serve to indicate the general nature of these problems. Nor can one encounter in the pages of *The Critical Review* any persistent attempt to discuss these problems as fully and competently as they warrant. It may require a good-sized library and the labor of many decades to study, sift and clarify all the significant aspects and questions of the Chinese cultural heritage for the benefit of modern China, and incidentally of the whole modern world. And the scholars and writers for this work may have to possess greater intellectual range and depth than the editors of *The Critical Review* have so far shown. But the inestimable value of this cultural heritage may be seen by all who are not so myopic as some of the modernists. Furthermore, no one seems more willing than the editors of *The Critical Review* to admit that their cultural tradition, which has suffered from a narrow self-sufficiency through its long geographical isolation, and its consequent lack of the advantages of comparison and competition, must needs be enriched, supplemented and, in the case of its aberrations, rectified. And its present contact, certainly the most significant in its historical career, with Western culture should afford it a welcome opportunity for expansion and self-improvement, but not for self-annihilation, as some of its modernist enemies wish.

That such a movement has not gained a fair and wide hearing is not strange under the circumstances. For it runs counter to all that the Chinese mind has exerted itself for a generation to accept and establish. The modernists are the new mandarins, and the religion of change and revolution has set itself up as a kind of new tradition which is more self-conscious, better organized, and less tolerant of opposition than the old tradition ever was. The press, the educational institutions, and the governmental machinery have been to a remarkable degree brought under the control of the modernist groups. Their minds are prematurely closed to all other points of view. Their boasted intellectual tolerance is reserved only for those who agree with them, or who are pliant to their dictation. And finally, while it is possible for the Occidental mind after two centuries of the modern experiment to weigh its pros and cons calmly and with some perspective, the Chinese mind is two centuries behind, so far as this modern experiment is concerned. Perhaps what a neutral observer said about it is worth quoting here. Mr. Low Kwanglai, apropos of the "Literary Revolution" in China, wrote in 1926 as follows in the *North American Review*:

> They [Mr. Mi Wu and others] started a review called *The Critical Review* which has for its aim the promotion of Chinese culture and the preservation of the great intellectual heritage of China, and is opposed to the new movement I have described. It is an excellent magazine in its own way, but as it runs counter to the popular tendency and, besides, as it has no catchword or battle cry to appeal to the popular imagination, the influence it is exercising over the generality of the students and the masses is naturally not very great. But still its criticism of the excesses of the Vernacular Movement and the rampant vices and abuses of those who are

* By "truths" are usually meant truths of human relationships.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fishing for fame supply a wholesome tonic and corrective.

Are there possibilities for a revival and further development of this movement? The question must be considered from three different angles: the movement itself, the intellectual conditions in China at present, and the newer intellectual tendencies coming from the West.

From the very outset, the movement has suffered from a want of well-defined issues. Probably the men engaged in it did not see clearly enough what the issues were, or saw too few of them. The doctrines and opinions of *The Critical Review* have struck the ordinary reader as vague, or narrowly confined to such philosophical and literary subjects as may be left to the custody and debate of academic leisure. Without necessarily resorting to catchwords or battle cries, as Mr. Low would seem to have suggested, they must set forth the issues more definitely and trenchantly, and provide them with more concrete and abundant content and illustrative material, to the end that these issues may be the better apprehended by both their opponents and the general public.

Furthermore, they must go much beyond the cold analytical process. A large measure of the driving power of passion and conviction behind those issues is imperatively needed to convert a recalcitrant world. For the question of life and death of Chinese culture is hanging in the balance at this critical moment. And certainly to the modern Chinese there is no higher duty than the preservation and honor of their inherited culture, which is the consecrated fruit of the genius and devotion of the noblest Chinese, and through which their very voice is still audible. It may be treated like Babylonian or Egyptian culture in some Western universities for the gratification of mere intellectual curiosity, it may be scorned as "relics of medievalism and feudalism" by revolutionary Chinese, but it should be a religion, with all the ecstasy and pathos of a religion, to those who have started a movement in its behalf.

Perhaps the psychological moment may soon be at hand. The Chinese may come to their senses again. For they have had a generation of frenzied chase after the phantoms of political and social and mechanical progress, only to discover that these phantoms remain tantalizing in the hazy distance and refuse to be overtaken. They are somewhat weary of the chase. They may soon discover also that a nation, like an individual, cannot be benefited by external imitation, if nothing like a predestined harmony between itself and what is imitated is latent in it. Denying, as the Chinese seem to do, that there is anything good inherent in themselves, how can they learn and assimilate anything good from others? After all there are two Chinas: the China of mandarinism, illiteracy, poverty, dirt and banditry, and the China of Confucius, Mencius, Tu Fu, Han Yü, Chü Hsi, and Tseng Kuo-fan—to mention but a few names more or less familiar to the West. The Chinese modernists see only the former, not the latter. No sane person would advocate a literal reversion even to the China of the latter type. But the men of this latter type, were they here today, could be true moderns, with the purity and nobility of their character and the sanity of their views essentially unaltered. One may go so far as to assert that only men of this type, who are the best representatives of the Chinese national *ethos*, can be safely entrusted with the task of modernizing China, and even with the task of so doing through the imitation of the West. Only they would know how to imitate the West, because they would not make themselves denationalized hybrids, or at best second-rate Europeans and Americans, but remain essentially Chinese with all their modern training and points of view.

And the hope of the present-day Chinese of this type is that they may be given a chance to prove to both China and the West what the real genius of Chinese culture can

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

do in the way of modernizing their country. In that case, the West must also reinterpret itself to China; that is, it must express itself not in the spirit of the nineteenth century, but in the spirit of its entire history. This is why the humanism of More and Babbitt has contributed much to clarifying the vision of those Chinese who have deeply felt its influence. The doctrines of the humanists have struck throughout the Western world a sympathetic chord in the minds of those who have sensed the threat of the cultural bankruptcy of the West. A reassertion and a realignment of those forces that have through the ages worked for the intellectual sanity and spiritual stability of the West seem to be the high mission of the few "adventurous souls". A wise solution of the problem of modern Western civilization would greatly facilitate a like solution of the problem of Chinese civilization. And none of course has perceived the interdependence of the two problems more clearly than Professor Babbitt himself. Ten years ago he concluded an address to a large gathering of Chinese students in these words:

> Why not work for a humanistic international? An international, one may say, of gentlemen who, without rising necessarily to the sublimities of religion, feel that they can at least unite on a platform of moderation and common sense and common decency. My hope is that, if such a humanistic movement gets started in the West, it will have a response in a Neo-Confucian movement in China—a Confucianism that will be disengaged from all the scholastic and formalistic accretions with which it has been overlaid in the course of centuries.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"INCENSE AND BREATH OF SPICE"

by C. E. Maguire

I shall die young though many my years are
For I was born under a kind star.

THE recent publication by Macmillan of *The Collected Poems* of Katharine Tynan, who died last April, has brought into the American limelight one of the sweetest warblers in that "nest of singing birds" which flourished as truly in Ireland in the end of the last century as in England under Elizabeth. In England, where Miss Tynan lived for many years, and in Ireland which was most decidedly her true country, she has not been without honor; but we in America, who have extended such gracious welcome and admiration to Æ, William Butler Yeats, and others who were of her immediate circle—"makers", she would call them—have consistently ignored Katharine's charms. "My verses", she remarked, in her *Twenty-five Years' Reminiscences*, "began to attract some attention in America, an attention which, I am sorry to say, has not continued"; and repeatedly, in her voluminous memoirs, we find half-wistful, half-annoyed references to this failure to build up an American audience. Nor have we any excuse for being unacquainted with her, since at various times she wrote for magazines published in this country, and many of her poems, memoirs and novels achieved American publication in book form.

Born in Dublin in the sixties, Miss Tynan spent her childhood at Whitehall, Clondalkin, in the house that "had once belonged to Curran, the great Irish patriot and lawyer, whose daughter should have married Robert Emmet"— fit nursery for so furious a patriot as Katharine was to be. Shortly before the removal to Whitehall she had suffered an infection of the eyes which made her almost blind for two years—"a long dream of pain and shrinking light"—and which, though cured, rendered her vision permanently dim. This defect, certainly an affliction for a woman with so passionate a love for physical beauty, she mocks at in *Purblind Praises the Lord*, boasting:

I miss the common and the dull,
The small details of things,
And only keep the beautiful,
The stars, the flowers, the wings.

I see the faces that are dear,
The others, they may pass.
I thank my God I see not clear
But dim, as in a glass.

During the early years at Whitehall, Katharine divided her time between reading and roving the fields, so meeting with three of the four influences which were so definitely to mould her literary style, the others being her Roman Catholic faith and her motherhood. In those days, to which she constantly referred, one beloved figure stands out, her father, whose love and companionship made her childhood and girlhood joyous; and in her verse, memories of him and of Whitehall are inextricably bound together:

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Magical country, full of memories and dreams,
My youth lies hidden in the crevices of your hills;
Here in the silk of your grass, by the edge of your meadows,
Every flower and leaf has its memories of you.
Home was home then and the people friendly,
And you and I, going home in the lengthening shadows.

Now I go home no more, though the swift car glides,
Carries me fast through the dear, the heavenly country.
They who were kind, who bid me "God save you!" of yore,
They are gone, they are flown, and only the country's the same;
And you sleeping so quietly under the grass!

But childhood yielded quickly to school days at Siena Convent, Drogheda, where, she says: "the convent glimmered like a pale star before me"; and though certainly she was not born to be a religious, much of the gentle sweetness of her religious verse must have had its roots in those brief days in Drogheda's "green garden-place of quiet restfulness". A characteristic recollection of those days she recorded in *Twenty-five Years*:

> When a plain British working man came to set the convent clocks, he was preceded through the corridors by a lay sister with her veil down to her eyes, ringing a bell. The shamefaced humor of the excellent man's expression was something to be remembered over many years. This particular simplicity very much amused the wicked little convent schoolgirls. . . .

At fourteen, far from embracing the nuns' life, she left Drogheda with a counsel from her teachers which I fear she never heeded: "that we should not look male creatures in the face when we encountered them!"

Then there was Whitehall again, a world of flowers and books; and here, somewhere about 1878, she wrote her first poem. Her literary career was begun—a career which brought her the friendship of the great of her day, a career so crowded and brilliant with gaiety and friendship, love and work, that one can only touch upon its especially colorful aspects. The friendships of her life were a chain of admirations, which are perilously close to adorations—Charles Stewart Parnell, Rose Macaulay, Alice Meynell, Francis Thompson, Lord Lytton, W. B. Yeats. The list comprises a literary and political Who's Who of the time.

For Parnell she never ceased to cherish that blind allegiance of which none but the Irish seem supremely capable. She was willing to twist every accusation against him into falsehood, if not actually into panegyric in his honor. There is a casual admission in her memoirs that in compiling a directory of Irish authors she deliberately omitted one unfortunate compatriot merely because he had once written scathingly of Parnell. She severed friendly relations with a number of priests and religious through her loyalty to her idol, who was under the ban of the Church. Never, despite her absorbing literary preoccupations, did she lose her intense personal interest in Irish politics. (Does any Irishman, ever?)

She sketched delicate word-pictures of Mrs. Meynell and her family, and an unforgettable portrait of "Willie" Yeats, whom she abandoned at a public fête because he insisted upon letting the umbrella drip down her back while he "poured poetry into her ear". Of Oscar Wilde she said with ladylike malice: "With him had come in the girl who was afterwards to have the irreparable misfortune to become his wife".

This cosmopolitan existence, however, while it lent sparkle to her memoirs, failed, curiously enough, to provide background for her mediocre novels, and was apparently forgotten altogether in her exquisite poetry. It was rather her marriage, in 1893, to Henry Hinkson, and the birth of her three children (One of them had Louise Guiney and Lionel Johnson for god-parents!) which colored her best work. Still, the story of her life is essential to an appreciation of her

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

poetry; for the same power to project her own personality, enthusiasms and opinions, which made her a poet of singular grace and charm, made her very weak as a novelist. Her failure in the latter field was directly due, no doubt, to her lack of that "creative imagination" which, according to Edith Wharton, "combines with the power of penetrating into other minds that of standing far enough aloof from them to see beyond and relate them to the whole stuff of life out of which they but partially emerge. Such an all-round view", she adds, "can be obtained only by mounting to a height, by the artist's power of detaching one part of the imagination from the particular problem in which the rest is steeped". Detachment was an attitude which Miss Tynan never assumed. Attachment may much more accurately be predicated of her. She admitted quite honestly of her works of fiction, moreover, that they were "pot-boilers", and no critical condemnation could be more conclusive.

Her poetry, however, needs no defense. It was the breath of life to her, the natural expression of every emotion. She said of herself:

> In a green land, without hunger and drouth,
> God gave a gift of singing to my mouth,
> A little song and quiet that was heard
> Through the full choir of many a golden bird . . .

and it is this persistent, bird-like melody which pervades all her verse. "She has", Æ says of her, "what is rarer among poets than most people imagine—a natural gift for song. . . . There was a mould in the psyche into which thought and emotion were poured, and the lyric record was almost always shapely. That artistic shapeliness is in danger of becoming lost in a generation which grew tired of the traditional court dress of poetry, and listened to so much free verse that it almost forgot what melody was." This quality, with an unfailing simplicity and sincerity, and with a strong current of religious belief flowing through every line, is the soul, literally the life-principle, of her poetry.

The religious note in her work seems the only object of critical attack—an unfair one, surely. Her poetry "is top-heavy with religion", one writer complains. "Her poetry is not bad poetry, but it is religious poetry." This accusation might even more justly be levelled at Gerard Manley Hopkins (another friend of Miss Tynan's) yet of him Malcolm Cowley writes: "He has recently been called the most important English poet of the Victorian era. Even this is true, in some respects". Admitting that Miss Tynan had not, as Father Hopkins had, either a passionately intense individuality or a style rich in extraordinary devices, I can still see no legitimate objection to her religious preoccupation, even were it so pronounced as the critic implies; and it is not so pronounced. On this point, Æ remarks that there are some poems of Miss Tynan's "whose art I admire, but which are born out of emotions I have not shared, or use a symbolism with which my childhood was not familiar, so that I could not make it a stepping-stone to the reality it stands for". He does not, however, on this account, condemn these poems, realizing that they express the poet's philosophy of life as legitimately and as exquisitely as Emily Dickinson's verses express the "New England Sappho's" delicate scientific agnosticism. It is characteristic of our generation that a poet may sing of his unbelief but never of his belief; and this fact makes Miss Tynan's work all the more a refreshing oasis of certainty in the sands of passionate and alliterative doubt, whether or not we believe her certainty has any dependable foundation.

To a great extent, the best of her purely religious poetry deals with legends whose beauty most of the world admits—even those who reject their authenticity. Such are the stories of Christ's life on earth, the sublime dignity of His mother, the traditional tales linked with Francis of Assisi. It requires, for

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

instance, no dogmatic belief in Mary's divine maternity, but only a sympathetic understanding of motherhood, to appreciate the loveliness and dramatic intensity of the lines:

"O Mother, I see a man of grief
Nailed to a cross on a hill-top high;
His head is bowed betwixt thief and thief—
O Mother, I fear that man is I!"

She kisses her Rose, His hands, His feet—
"It was but dreaming, my Son so small!"
But over her heart, in the noon-tide heat,
The shadows of three gaunt crosses fall.

St. Francis, too, is universally accepted in some capacity or other, and *St. Francis to the Birds* is a whimsical dramatization of that love of nature which has earned modern approval for the Assisian mystic:

Little sisters, the birds:
We must praise God, you and I—
You with songs that fill the sky,
I, with halting words . . .

Such poems as these may have their appeal primarily to those to whom "the symbols she uses are keys to a sanctuary they often enter", that is, to Roman Catholics; but they cannot be accused by anyone of introducing a discordant note into her "little song and quiet", which has melody for the ears of all the world.

But religion is not the only string she plucked. Her nature poems, by far the largest portion of her work, are especially and almost exclusively an expression of her passionate loyalty to Ireland—Ireland present, Ireland remembered, Ireland dreamed of:

Though all my loves of old have passed away,
And lie at rest wrapped in your holy clay,
I do not love you any less or more,
Seeing I love you for yourself, asthore:
My own land with your misty veils and hills
Where my heart wanders by the happy rills.

When she included the English countryside, it is always from the viewpoint of a stranger. The one notable exception to this rule is the brief, poignant *Farewell*, of which the anthologies are fond, and in which she takes leave of Ealing:

Not soon shall I forget a sheet
Of golden water, cold and sweet,
The young moon with her head in veils
Of silver, and the nightingales.

A wain of hay came up the lane—
O fields I shall not walk again,
And trees I shall not see, so still
Against a sky of daffodil.

Fields where my happy heart had rest,
And where my heart was heaviest,
I shall remember them at peace
Drenched in moon-silver like a fleece.

The golden water sweet and cold,
The moon half-silver and half-gold,
The dew upon the grey grass-spears:
I shall remember them with tears.

In comparison with such poetry as Emily Dickinson's, the diversity of images employed in Miss Tynan's purely descriptive lines may seem limited. She did not, for instance, find it expedient to cultivate the imposing scientific vocabulary of the New Englander, nor did she coin color-words whose cadences vibrate with beauty. Curiously enough, she is rarely repetitious, though her thoughts may be said to circle on a narrow track.

Birds, beasts and flowers, hills, fields and sea—all have a place in her picture. It is probably because of the dimness of her sight that the blurred colors and pastels predominate. (Emily preferred purple and red and gold.) The same fact explains the elements of sound and fragrance which are invariably woven into her descriptions, as in *Holiday*:

All night the fragrant dew and cool
Lies like a little silver pool
About the corncrake's feet; he stalks
By emerald and by amber walks;
And is ensilvered by the moon
From his grey head to his grey shoon.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Such quietness on vale and hill
Such skies of rose and daffodil
And primrose, and the sleepy folk
Wrapped in the silence as a cloak
Bordered with roses small and close;
My dreams are drenched with attar of rose.

Usually, too, her nature poems are joyous, but occasionally joy yields to the deep-lying Irish melancholy, notably in *Mayo*. County Mayo is particularly dear to her heart because she lived there during the war years when her sons were at the front; and because it was there that, in 1919, her husband died. There is a wild yearning in *Mayo*:

Was I ever fretful, of your beauty forgetful,
Were the days ever sad and slow,
When he and I together walked in the wild weather
Your roads and your fields, Mayo?

There's a blue sea by Achill, and a long heather hill;
My heart keeps sighing soft and low;
But we'll never come again in the sun or in the rain
Over your shining plains, Mayo.

Her war poems form no small part of her collection. Several volumes of them have been published, of which the best is probably her *Holy War*. "Brave and adventurous", someone has called them, but they are rebellious, indignant and sorrowful, too. In them, as in all her work, there is the mother-feeling. She loved young people, especially boys. In an amusing anecdote in *The Wandering Years*, she told of a

lay brother at a Jesuit college reading aloud from *The Lives of the Saints* during a meal in the boys' refectory. The lay-brother read out monotonously the opening of a new chapter: "St. James goes up into the Desert with his Missus". One can imagine the sudden eagerness of the boys! It was the good brother's rendering of MSS.

At the opposite extremity of the emotional scale, she quoted a letter from a young English officer, Lord Elcho, written to his mother after his brother's death in action. Near the end he remarks, commenting on the toll the war has taken of his family: "When all is said and done, we were a damned good family. . . ." and Miss Tynan added understandingly: "I like that 'damned good' ". Her most famous war poem, *Flower of Youth*, had an extraordinary vogue. ("The Bishop of London", she says, "used it more than once in his sermons.") It is not her best, though one stanza is especially good:

Heaven's thronged with gay and careless faces.
New-waked from dreams of dreadful things,
They walk in green and pleasant places
And by the crystal water-springs,
Who dreamt of dying and the slain,
And the fierce thirst and the strong pain.

Her *Prayer for the Flying Men* sounds a unique note:

Thou Who guidest the swallow and wren,
Keep the paths of the flying men.

Keep them riding the wind. Uphold
Their passion of flight lest it grow cold.

Thy right hand be under their wing,
Thy left hand for the steadying.

The wings of the birds of heaven be nigh
Lest their wings fail them and they die.

An even more fanciful and individual note is embodied in *The Vestal*:

She goes unwedded all her days
Because some man she never knew,
Her destined mate, has won his bays,
Passed the low door of darkness through.

His voice is lost upon the wind;
And when the rain beats on her heart
His eyes elude her, warm and kind,
Where the dim shadows steal apart.

She lives unwedded—as for him
He sleeps too sound for any fret
At their lost kisses, or the dream
Of the poor girl he never met.

The remainder of her work comprises mother-poetry and "personalia"—exquisite

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

melodies that cry out for quotation—some irresistibly:

She only died last week, and yet
Suns might have risen, suns have set
A thousand. May's here like a bride,
And it was May when Mary died.

Last week she died. The lilac-bough
Her eyes watched bud is blooming now;
The chestnut's lit her lamp since then;
And the lost cuckoo's come again.

A week ago! O endless space,
Since Mary heavenward turned her face!
And still the lilac's on the spray
That budded when she went away.

Surely the singer who gave the world such lovely melodies deserves a hearing. The present collection (it is not, as the title indicates, a complete one), while it omits several poems which Miss Tynan's admirers would like to see included, is so judiciously chosen as to present her style at its best, and to show how her verses vary, with a nice degree of impartiality, between the two points—kindred ones, surely, to Miss Tynan—heaven and Ireland. Heaven was a kind of backdrop against which she set her drama, or a canvas on which she outlined her sketches. She looked upon it, with all reverence but with delightful familiarity, as the last stop on a road with many enthralling, but not necessarily siren-purposed, stopping places. And if heaven was the haven of eventual rest, Ireland was the oasis among present tribulations. This is the narrow track on which, as I have mentioned, her verses circle. Perhaps it is the hidden beauty spots lying along the way that preserved her from monotony.

It is almost time that we forgot, for a moment, our erratically paced stanza-mongers and listened to the clear trill of a singing bird—a singer of whom we may say, as she said of Alice Meynell:

Lingering and lovely voice—
Lutes, dulcimers, hautboys—
Her voice remembers how the music went.
Still holds the rise and fall,
The sob ecstatical
Of some most heavenly-sweet wind instrument.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THOUGHTS BROUGHT ON BY 633 MANUSCRIPTS

by James Gould Cozzens

In assembling statistics for 1930—after an interval of recuperating—and generally looking over the home-made manuscript industry, an impartial observer, let alone the present writer, must be cheered to realize that no depression (in a sense demonstrated by a nation-wide shutdown with reduced production and the laying-off of labor) can be said to have occurred. Even with allowances for an occasional slight error in arithmetic, it is safe to announce that during the calendar year just numbered the Unpublished Book Field, not content with remaining steady, has made advances of a substantial sort over 1929, whose figures I am sorry to say are also in my possession. In celebration of the bumper crop I am driven to present this rather complicated analysis of a situation whose seriousness is kept from the public's eye only by a thin line of publishers' readers. Their devoted work in the common interest, as seldom applauded as overpaid, I feel qualified to admire, although my own information comes from no connection with a publishing house. Names, addresses, titles, certifying the relative correctness of my figures I must merely protest are in my possession, where certainly they may not be examined by anyone interested.

The fact that I have such proof is mentioned chiefly for the benefit of readers who imagine that the old practice of getting books from authors has been largely superseded by the erection of clean modern plants where books are written, printed, and bound in one simple operation. For readers not in this error but in the graver error of being or planning to be authors themselves, I offer what cheer they can squeeze from the carefully calculated fact that of the 633 manuscripts pressed on my attention during 1930, not less than 15 are now, or will anon be, genuine printed books, bearing the blurbs and colophons of respected American publishers. Most of them will be available to the prudent public in 1931 or 1932 as remainders in some accessible drug store, and when this happens I will be pleased to name 3 of them as well worth any substantially reduced price.

However, setting 15 aside, a few minutes' subtraction shows a remainder of 618 manuscripts not at the moment likely to congest the stalls. Any study, however idle, of the Unpublished Book may well base itself by analyzing the unfulfilled threat contained in this minor, but I fear representative, assortment.

First of all, though I cannot see exactly what bearing it has, I happen to have worked it out and so might just as well note that, of the 618, 201 were the work of females. This would indicate that twice and a few more as many men are in a position to stay home and kill time. The implications, no doubt involving comparative intelligence, prevalence of unemployment, and susceptibility to unfounded optimism, are fortunately well outside the scope of this study. Therefore this

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

division by sex (or, to avoid confusion when I come to Sex in a more interesting sense, gender) may now be considered as not made. Divided more pertinently, the 618 yield 129 works roughly described as non-fiction; that is, purporting to deal with facts of various sorts. Ten are volumes of verse. Four are plays best explained as written to be read. Twenty-seven are juveniles—works wildly imagined to be suitable for children.

In the light of this classification, I must confess to a certain astonishment that so few people have realized that the mental labor, time, and typewriting required to produce a book of poems (which, should it by any chance be printed, is just as much a book as anything else) averages in actual covering of pages less than one-tenth of that demanded by the briefest novel. In surprising fact, only 9 individuals clutched at this short-cut. The tenth I exclude, for he put himself to the doubtless very considerable trouble of composing an epic poem two thousand lines longer than *The Aeneid*, dealing with the arrival of the nineteenth century somewhere in outer space where it attempted to justify itself in company with a group of centuries from other planets.

II

Under the heading of non-fiction I somewhat arbitrarily find place for 17 accounts of trips to Europe; 9 of trips to other continents and islands; and 7 telling how two or more girls or boys toured some part of America in a Ford (or similar vehicle). To these might as well be added such more impersonal works as 3 volumes boosting New Zealand, one of which rests its case on the fact that Admiral Byrd paused there; 4 impression-correcting pictures of the real India; and 4 impartial removals of the veil from the U.S.S.R. A close counting shows me that Spain, with 5 recorded jaunts through it, assumes the position held in 1929 by North Africa, as the most trod-upon land.

With justification perhaps even less apparent, I also assign to non-fiction 29 volumes of personal reminiscences. Of those who were led by the prayers and fears of their friends thus to memorialize themselves, 8 are big game hunters; 6 are old ladies who were either minor actresses, leaders in the feminist movement of the seventies, or the first females to arrive at Medicine Knee in a covered wagon; 6 are new Trader Horns in three continents; 5 are devil-may-care lads who worked their way around the world; 1 is an infant (that is: a lady collected the remarks and adventures of her little son, in his own words, from the age of first articulation to his admission to the ranks of the Boy Scouts). If conditions appear frankly bad in this department, there is a compensatory sign of improvement in the recently crowded field of amateur biography, no more than 11 making an appearance. The fact that these featured Mary Queen of Scots, Charlotte Brontë, Marie Louise, Pavlova, Madame Récamier, Baron von Steuben, Chateaubriand, Puccini, Mohammed, and Mustafa Kemal does not seem to show much of anything, but I can find reason to hope that 1931 may produce none at all.

Naturally the great mass of non-fiction work is less easily summed up. Under considerable pressure as many as 22 books would fall in a field entitled Philosophy, Religion, and How to Succeed. These vary from complete new explanations of the universe, to volumes (2) exposing the inaccuracies of the Bible, urging a greater interest in God, and proving that our civilization derives directly from St. Thomas Aquinas. The strong 1929 movement to reduce the Arts and Sciences to our mental level continued in medicine (1); psychology (1); law (2); spiritualism (3); dynamic dancing (1); games of chance (1); mastering sexual problems (1); large-scale professional rat catching (1). Exposés are in a sharp decline, showing up only dental colleges, San Quentin prison, what a girl has to submit to in order to be a trained

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nurse, and the small salaries of the United States Immigration Service. As for timely topics, 2 books deal with prohibition; one claiming it is not a success, the other proving the benefits of wine-drinking through the ages and pointing to the fate of totally abstaining Islam. The sorry state of America, including the current hard times, is expounded by 3 upset authors who claim that it is all due to (*a*) the fact that you can't get your money from the government if you insure a parcel, have it lost, and will not tell what was in it; (*b*) failure to read the Bible; (*c*) housewives in the suburbs who go for luncheon to Italian restaurants in Manhattan and there drink liquor which unfits them for fixing a warm supper at home.

III

It is, however, among the 448 volumes of fiction that the most thought-provoking points should appear if they are ever going to. To cut this field into manageable portions, 43 volumes may immediately be segregated. These are mystery stories, and devote themselves to explaining murders which happened in a telephone booth, in a dinette, in a tea room, in the Rue Bonaparte, in the butler's pantry, on a house-boat, on a sleeping-porch, on the Mediterranean, in the Gem Theatre, at the British Embassy in Paris, at a house in King's Lane, at five places on Long Island. The season's novelty killing-tools include a cross-bow, a grappling hook, an umbrella handle, and a monster bred for the purpose in a laboratory. Of the solutions, 21 are presented by amateur detectives of variously wide reading and sardonic remarks; 10 by guests at the house party with no previous experience; 8 by newspaper reporters; 2 by accredited members of the police forces most concerned. The rest introduced what appeared to me to be the drastic innovation of baffling the writer as much as the reader and so producing nothing which could be called an explanation at all.

A second helpful subdivision embraces the realistic fiction founded on the gripping story of the youth who went to college. A strong advance over 1929 here appears. The scenes selected are the Universities of Chicago, Illinois, Nebraska, Ohio, Texas, Tennessee, Washington (2), Wisconsin; Harvard College; and less definite institutions named Wilton, Spencer, Tunk, and Brandford. As you know, the young man fell in with a gin-drinking crowd and became in general rather cynical. At all except Harvard and Spencer, where substitutes were found in adjacent cities, he also fell in with impulsive and fatally beautiful co-eds. Thus, rather sombrely as a rule, he either graduated or, in nine cases (*a*) withdrew disillusioned, (*b*) was retired, disciplined. In all 3 events, he began immediately to write the novel which I usually must conclude I am just finishing.

In approaching a third well-defined group, I should mention the fact that a number of those manuscripts just considered are either on the line, or a foot or two over it. However, not counting them, I am able to distinguish 23 non-collegiate novels conveniently to be described as coming into the Firm Young Breasts class. Perhaps 16 of these deal in such copious and courageous detail with anatomy and physiology that decorum forbids a more detailed analysis. The 7 others, while tantalizingly omitting the more overt acts of conventional impropriety, proceed from disrobing scene to disrobing scene with a rapidity and enthusiasm unsuitable certainly for impressionable minors. I am, however, glad to be able to report that the outstanding 1929 favorite of this second type (the wife-in-name-only-until-page-320 theme) is losing ground, affording only three examples.

There remain some definite, but smaller, classifications by type; and I will designate them as Whimsy, Clean Historical Romance, Unclean Historical Romance, and Profound Significance. Most of these are patently derivative from (respectively) the work of Richard Hughes, Sabatini, James Branch

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Cabell, and James Joyce. Excluding the Sabatini derivatives as showing nothing but idleness and the influence of the cinema, I detect a very gratifying falling off in the last 2 categories. In no more than 4 cases was I, through the author's unquestioned premeditation and design, prevented from finding out either what the subject of the pages on hand might be, or what language had been employed to increase their profundity and significance. An even more marked decline dominates the field of Ironies, Carolingian, Medieval, and Louis Quinze, only two examples appearing. Whimsy, on the other hand, appeared in considerable quantities, with a strong bullish tendency which leads me to predict a marked movement in it during 1931.

IV

With the 300 odd works remaining, almost insurmountable difficulties face the analyst. Only the most hardened and desperate reader, acquainted with every short-cut and labor-saving device, could hope to make his way beyond the first few pages. A skilled and patient operator can, however, by certain methods (which I feel bound not to disclose as the livelihood of a considerable body of publishers' readers may well depend on their monopoly of them) come in time to classify this material with uncanny accuracy. Thus I am able to report that about 100 tell how he married the girl. Perhaps 50 relate the story of how the boy grew up in various climes and conditions. About the same number deal with the difficulties of being married, in 22 or 23 cases affording a joyful solution. Those that are left can only be described as character studies as they are unquestionably about characters, but they do not for some reason get anywhere which could be summed up in a sentence. In this connection, an over-all summary of the favorite characters of 1930 may have some not immediately clear significance. The Principal Characters, in so far as they duplicate each other, are: persons of wealth and leisure, 101; writers of this or that sort, 49; artists in oils, 15; cattle herders and horse handlers, 38; planters in a tropical place, 7; ministers, 14; Aztec or Inca princesses, 6; motion picture stars, 5; harlots, 5; A.E.F. warriors, 14; Negroes of superior intelligence, 9; railroad engineers, 4; dogs, 3; dead and having a witty time in hell, 3; personages from Holy Writ, including the Lord, 6.

In conclusion the present writer wishes to say frankly that it seems to him fortunate that he could not work out any more figures, as those already set down can only combine to force from him the disheartening reflection that no more than 98 out of every 100 persons who decide that they might as well write a book today, are really sure to be wrong on the point. As long as American publishers refuse to coöperate in such a way as to make 100 out of every 100 absolutely certain to be wrong, there is little reason to look for improvement in that direction. To my mind, the one practical prospect for relief from manuscript writing lies in a renewed appeal to the public not to falter in its commendable stand against both the principle and practice of book buying. I do not wish to minimize the widespread and effective work along this line which has been done during the year past; but we must not be content with half measures, and it behooves us to realize that so long as one publisher remains solvent, manuscript writing will persist. Nothing short of the total abatement of this nuisance should satisfy us. Knowing full well the dangers in undue optimism, I none the less make bold to believe that this Nation, under God, will get there yet.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PRELUDE

by Conrad Aiken

Then came I to the shoreless shore of silence,
Where never summer was nor shade of tree,
Nor sound of water, nor sweet light of stars,
But only nothing and the shore of nothing,
Above, below, around, and in my heart:

Where day was not, nor night, nor wind, nor sky,
Where no bird sang, save him of memory,
Nor footsteps marked upon the marl, to guide
My halting footstep; and I turned for terror,
Seeking in vain the Pole-star of my thought;

Where it was blown among the shapeless clouds,
And gone as soon as seen, and scarce recalled,
Its image lost and I directionless;
Alone upon the brown sad edge of chaos,
In the wan evening that was evening always;

Then closed my eyes upon the living sea
While memory brought back a sea more bright,
With long, long waves of light, and the swift sun,
And the good trees that bowed upon the wind;
And stood until grown dizzy with that dream;

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Seeking in all that joy of things remembered
One image, one the dearest, one most bright,
One face, one star, one daisy, one delight,
One hour with wings most heavenly and swift,
One hand the tenderest upon my heart;

But still no image came, save of that sea,
No tenderer thing than thought of tenderness,
No heart or daisy brighter than the rest;
And only sadness at the bright sea lost,
And mournfulness that all had not been praised.

O lords of chaos, atoms of desire,
Whirlwind of fruitfulness, destruction's seed,
Hear now upon the void my late delight,
The quick brief cry of memory, that knows
At the dark's edge how great the darkness is.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE

II. IS LIBERAL EDUCATION WANTED?

by Robert Shafer

In an unpublished letter of 15 December, 1867, Mark Pattison wrote that "a University, in ceasing to be a school for the elements of the classical languages, should become an Institute of knowledge in all the main departments of human interest, with teaching up to the level of extant science as one of its functions". By this he meant practically what Dr. Flexner means today when he says that the graduate school is "the heart of the university", as anyone can see who reads Pattison's *Suggestions on Academical Organization with Especial Reference to Oxford*. For there is a striking general similarity between this book, published sixty-three years ago, and Dr. Flexner's *Universities, American, English, German*. Several causes unite to account for this, but one in particular is important and obvious. Both Pattison in the 1860's and Dr. Flexner today have been deeply impressed by the achievements of the modern German universities, and each has formed his conception of the constitution and office of the university in the light of German example.

This, of course, explains Dr. Flexner's readiness to discard the American college. There is nothing like it in Germany, where general education is much more thorough, and is carried much further, in secondary schools than with us; and where the university as a consequence is composed entirely of what we should call the graduate faculties of philosophy, medicine, law, and theology —with technical and vocational training relegated to separate institutions. But, more than this, the pronounced resemblance between Pattison's *Suggestions* and Dr. Flexner's book is fairly indicative of the simple fact that German universities have exerted a profound influence upon higher education in America and, scarcely less, in England throughout the last half-century or more. With England I am not directly concerned in this discussion, but it is necessary to emphasize the truth that what Pattison inaugurated, Dr. Flexner, in so far as his book may have practical effect, is merely carrying to its logical conclusion. He is doing so, furthermore, at the end of a period in which, amidst all our experimental fumbling, the greatest and most far-reaching changes in our higher education have resulted from our efforts to proceed in exactly the direction towards which he points. Dr. Flexner's opportunities for condemnatory criticism, and any appearance of novelty in his suggestions, arise entirely from our failures to accomplish our professed aims, and from our propensity to forget those aims even when we have organized our activities largely in terms of them. It is not a revolution which Dr. Flexner has proposed, but merely an honest and consistent attempt to complete the work we undertook when we set about establishing universities in America. And it is because of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

this close relevance of his book to our actual situation, almost as much as because of the transparent correctness of his view of the nature and function of the university, that I ventured to think the work might mark a decisive turning-point in American education.

This means, moreover, that the proposal to do away, as soon as it may be possible, with the college of liberal arts is one that has already been acted upon. It has not been acted upon openly and wholeheartedly until quite recently, when Johns Hopkins announced her intention of abandoning her undergraduate college and of admitting students to her graduate school upon their completion, at any accredited institution, of not less than two years of collegiate work; and when Stanford University, almost at the same time, announced a similar determination. The daily and weekly press of the country received these as revolutionary announcements, and for a brief period there was much grave discussion of the significant place hitherto held by the college in American life, accompanied by expressions of doubt as to whether any university could or should take the "radical step" proposed.

In truth, however, it was not a "radical step"; it was not "revolutionary"; it was merely the inevitable conclusion towards which we had been moving for more than a generation, and amounted only to an open recognition of changes already effected throughout the land. For—leaving out of account the University of Virginia, a "special case" from the day of its foundation until recent years—the first measures taken to introduce genuine university work into the United States, in the 1870's, were calculated to undermine the college as a self-contained and unified institution, and they were at once partially successful. At that time higher education of a non-professional kind was entirely in the hands of the colleges. Those who desired opportunities for advanced study, who wanted to obtain the degree of Ph.D., who aimed to equip themselves for scientific investigation or for careers of scholarship in history, literature, or philosophy—in fact all who desired advanced work of genuine university quality, even in the fields of medicine, law, and theology, had then to go to Europe. And men went, in practically every case, to Germany. The German universities, since the early years of the nineteenth century, had justly won for themselves a high prestige; they offered exactly what was wanted; they were abreast of the best scholarship and scientific work of the time, and boasted a brilliant array of investigators and lecturers. There were great men at work elsewhere—some of the greatest of the nineteenth century—but they were working in isolation, privately, while institutions of learning in Italy, in Spain, in France, and in England were either stagnant or shockingly backward, or, as in France, had become the prey of changing politics. Hence the institutional development of modern science and of modern "scientific" scholarship had fallen exclusively into the hands of the German universities.

Hence, too, those who became professors in our colleges were increasingly men who had received their higher training in Germany. It was natural, it was unavoidable, it was immeasurably beneficial to us, that, under these circumstances, *Wissenschaft* should have presently become "the thing". In essence it was an ideal, arising from the conviction that knowledge is valuable for its own sake, and inspired by the hope of extending the boundaries of knowledge indefinitely in all directions through the application and adaptation of the rigorous, objective methods of exact science. This hope seemed reasonable, and was made vigorous, because of a long succession of great achievements, extending through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in the realm of physical science. It is now clear enough, in the light of some developments it has provoked, as Dr. Flexner has so convincingly shown, that the ideal contained the seeds of mischief; but this

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

should blind no one to its beneficent aspects, or to the imperative need of its stimulus in which American education stood in the decade following the Civil War.

For, though the vulgar notion that our oldest colleges were founded simply, or chiefly, to train up puritan ministers has no foundation in fact,* still, it is evident that practically from the earliest times a narrow, intense piety reigned over the officers, at least, of the great majority of our collegiate institutions. And, too, amidst the distractions and practical needs of life in a new world, far from the springs of culture, with grave political problems engrossing the best minds, and with unexampled economic opportunities inspiring dreams of a new species of empire and inviting a new species of conquest, it was probably inevitable that the true nature and value of liberal education should have become more and more obscured, and that thus the way should have been made easy for pressing the colleges into the service of zealous religious sects. This at any rate happened, and in out-of-the-way corners of the country institutions still remain which exhibit today the evil consequences of allowing higher education to become an instrument, subservient to the supposed interests of some religious body. And partly for this reason, American colleges at the close of the Civil War, taking them as a whole, were offering an education which had become unreal because of its empty formalism and increasingly tenuous connection with surrounding life; while, at the same time, these institutions had a vitality which was genuine enough, but which on religious grounds actually opposed them to some of the true interests of education. In particular, their vital principle opposed them indiscriminately to the new sciences and to the new developments of the older sciences, and encouraged them to treat their students like children, and, indeed, to prolong their immaturity.

Under these circumstances the apostles of *Wissenschaft* had a clear call, and they responded in the only possible way. One is tempted to assert that anything they could do was bound to result in improvement—and, in fact, I think it simply undeniable that the eulogy which a whole generation has bestowed upon the greatest of those apostles, Charles W. Eliot, was richly deserved. But it seems to me equally undeniable that the ultimate consequences of their work may be, if anything, worse than the conditions they set out to alter, unless they are checked, confined, and directed on the basis of careful criticism.

The aim of these men was to establish universities in America—"institutes of knowledge in all the main departments of human interest, with teaching up to the level of extant science as one of their functions". In only one instance was it found possible to create a new institution devoted specifically to this purpose. This was the Johns Hopkins University, which opened its doors in 1876. But even at Johns Hopkins, though its faculty of philosophy has never been confusingly merged with any other faculty, though it has always been maintained as a distinct body, to the unqualified advantage both of the institution and of American education and scholarship, still, it was necessary also to establish an undergraduate college, because practically no American college at that time adequately prepared its students for advanced work of university quality, especially in the sciences. And it was these colleges which, elsewhere, the apostles of *Wissenschaft* had to try to convert into universities, adapting them as best they could to the model they knew—the German university. There could be no question that the colleges stood in need of great changes; there could be no question that America stood in need of universities; there could be no question that knowledge was rapidly expanding and

* Dr. Alexander Meiklejohn, in *The Liberal College* (pp. 16-25), has so effectively exposed the fallacious character of this notion that there is no longer the slightest excuse for its persistence.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was, as things were, entirely without institutional representation or support in this country. At the same time, the colleges could not be simply dispensed with, as the example of Johns Hopkins showed, and resources were not forthcoming for the establishment of new institutions, though means could be summoned for the expansion of old ones. Hence the case seemed complete for transforming existing colleges into universities by superimposing on them graduate schools—that is, faculties of philosophy and, in most instances, of medicine and of law, and, in a few instances, of theology.

But changes, of course, did not stop at this point; they gradually extended, to bring about finally the state of confusion discussed in my preceding paper. And the process of change, as was also mentioned in that paper, constantly affected the undergraduate college. For admittedly the colleges needed reformation; but they received it at the hands of men whose aim was the creation of universities, whose interests were "scientific", and whose desire was, not to develop, but to use the colleges. The college, in other words, had already become, as if prophetically, a football. The religious team had secured possession of it, but was now challenged by the "scientific" team, which presently secured the ball, held it, and in fact ran away with it. For reformation was secured by introducing the "free-elective" system—suggested by German university practice—into the college, and by rendering the newly created graduate school, or faculty of philosophy, as nearly indistinguishable as possible from the college. The plan permitted, and indeed encouraged, the indefinite multiplication of subjects and of "courses" covering "all the main departments of human interest", and these were opened on equal terms to all students, whether graduate or undergraduate. The bachelor's degree was then given, not for a certain kind of work, but for a certain amount; and this amount qualified the student to proceed in due course to the doctorate in philosophy by further study of any of the subjects in which instruction was sufficiently organized. The result was that the earliest part of the student's collegiate education was devoted to making good the deficiencies of his secondary schooling, and to preparation for undertaking work of university grade in the chief subject of his choice as promptly as possible. And from that point his collegiate education was indistinguishable from the work of the graduate student, and its content was a matter of indifference to all save the undergraduate himself. Furthermore, the merger of the college and the new graduate school was completed by maintaining only one faculty common to both schools. Every professor was, in theory, regarded as a university professor, while he was in fact at the same time a college professor. And the aim of the institution was, after completing the secondary or preparatory education of its students as quickly as might be, to treat them as much as possible as if they were enrolled in a German university.

The plan was a compromise. It was impossible—in an undertaking which could be entrusted neither to radical politicians nor to the young Napoleons of the press—to effect a complete transformation overnight. There were not only our deficient secondary schools to reckon with, but other difficulties. All of the students who came to be educated wanted the bachelor's degree, and very many of them wanted nothing more. It had a value associated with a long tradition, and American social conditions had heightened that value—for reasons, indeed, which had little to do with education, but which nevertheless were potent. Some students were pleased by the new method of obtaining it, others were indifferent, but all wanted it, even if they also wanted something more. One of the advantages of the elective system, it was said, was that everybody could satisfy himself, if he had any requirements to satisfy. If anyone still wanted the kind of education hitherto required for the bachelor's degree, he could

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

simply elect the old subjects;—though even these were to be taught in a new way, and this did make a difference, about which something will be said presently. But in addition to the old subjects there were many new ones, and all were divided and subdivided into many short "courses", so that, very soon after the establishment of the new plan, it became possible for every student practically to select his own education, and out of hundreds, or even thousands, of graduates no two might have had exactly the same course of instruction. There seemed to be, then, no compelling reason to abandon the degree, as long as it was wanted. Even when the schools of law, medicine, and theology were raised to a level with the graduate school of arts and sciences, and when it was found necessary, for this purpose, to require special preparation of candidates for admission, it was easy to accommodate the new plan to this need. A six-year medical course, for example, was created—the first two years of which the student took by electing the right subjects while a candidate for the bachelor's degree. He then passed into the medical school for the remaining four years' work, but the transition was more formal than real. The real transition occurred when the student passed from his completed secondary education to the specialized work in the exact sciences which formed the foundation of his medical training.

And this was equally true in every other case, whatsoever the student's aim or chief subject of study. The work of the college fell into two divisions, one devoted to the completion of secondary education, the other devoted to specialized study of university quality;—and the latter was designed to be continuous with, and identical in character and aim with, the work of the graduate schools. Thus, though the new plan was a compromise, it embodied as little in the way of concession from the apostles of *Wissenschaft* as seemed possible. Outward signs of the old order remained, but, in so far as the objects of reformers were attained, little else. The extent to which those objects were attained varied greatly with local conditions, and of course, amongst them, with local resources—for the new plan was expensive. At Harvard, where it was devised, it achieved its most complete and impressive embodiment. But it spread everywhere, irresistibly, in more or less modified form, partly because it met needs which were everywhere felt, and partly because it was supported by the great prestige of Harvard. Even colleges with no intention or hope of becoming universities perforce adopted the plan, carrying it to the point necessary for a four-year course of study, so that the elective system came to be universally regarded as the indispensable method of higher education;—and in more recent years it has spread to the secondary schools.

Obviously, wherever the system has been maintained in accordance with the spirit which gave it birth, it has tended to render the college of liberal arts a meaningless and unnecessary institution. And it is now very generally acknowledged that the bachelor's degree has, for the reasons which have been given and also for other related reasons still to be mentioned, lost any meaning it may once have had. It has, too, more slowly, lost much of the extrinsic value it once had. And, as a matter of fact, the old colleges are beginning to be replaced by the so-called junior colleges, which are being established both within some of our universities and as separate institutions. It is doubtful if any of these institutions has yet become, or can become, other than a very unsatisfactory makeshift. But this renders their swift spread only the more surprising and significant. According to the most recent survey available,* there are at present more than 325 junior colleges in the United States, attended by over 40,000 students. What this means can more readily

* By Professor Leonard V. Koos, in *Higher Education in America*, edited by President Raymond A. Kent (1930).

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

be seen if it is remembered that in 1900 there were less than a dozen of these institutions in existence, all of which were private establishments. By 1922 there were more than 200; and in the five years from 1922 to 1927 more than a hundred new ones were founded, and the number of students enrolled in junior colleges was, during the same period, more than doubled. The movement has taken on the proportions, indeed, of a major phenomenon, and educational authorities cannot much longer refuse to consider its meaning. However unplanned, amateurish, third-rate, and pretentious many of its individual manifestations may be, this movement is a logical step in the development which has here been outlined. It falls in with and is simply complementary to the plans of Johns Hopkins and Stanford;—and it should, moreover, now be clear that the plans of these universities are more different in appearance than in reality from the practice of nearly all our "institutes of knowledge", and amount, in fact, only to an open recognition of changes already effected throughout the land.

Certain advantages, however, usually follow from the candid recognition of things for what they are, and education is no exception to the rule. No one is now likely to contend that we do not need universities; all of the evidence suggests that ours were created in the only practicable way; but the time has certainly come when it is no longer *necessary* to preserve meaningless undergraduate colleges which obscure the true lines of division in our scheme of higher education, and it would be an unqualified advantage to discard them.

To do so would be to rid ourselves of the chief source of that disastrous confusion which was discussed in my preceding paper. For when once the old American college had been broken up, its place was not completely taken, save in a very few institutions, by pure science and scholarship. The old college, as I have suggested, had already lost a clear sense of having a distinctive function to perform. And its new directors, in introducing the elective system, set up an ideal which is fundamental for the university but foreign to liberal education. The new system, in other words, not only cut across the upper boundary of the old college to unite its later work with that of the graduate and professional schools, it also proclaimed that the enlarged domain of modern knowledge now required for mastery—and, even more, for new conquests—a thoroughgoing specialism. It proclaimed that no individual henceforth could hope to master for himself more than a tiny portion of some vast field which was itself but a portion of the whole domain; that a multiple division of effort had become necessary, to which the individual must subordinate himself as an instrument to a larger end; and that this narrow concentration of study should, and indeed must, be made the principal, if not the sole, occupation of the individual. At the same time, the proponents of the new system were under the necessity of asserting that no subject of study was essential to a complete education, because, out of all the possibilities offered by way of electives, no student could choose many, nor more than a single principal subject. *Some* subject was essential, and thoroughgoing specialization in that; but what the subject might be was a matter of indifference;—all subjects were equally important, or—it came to the same thing—equally unimportant. The essential things were discipline, training in the technique of investigation, the habit of logical thought, and the like.

This argument, though transparently fallacious, is still heard, because it is all that can be urged in apology for the necessary methods of the university when these are used for the purposes of collegiate or liberal education. It would be an advantage, certainly, to be rid of this source of confusion. And, moreover, it has not only been mischievous in itself, but the begetter of mischief. For it promptly opened the door of the college,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and of the university, to "useful subjects", "practical studies", because it had, for quite another reason, denied the possibility of discrimination. The development was natural and, once it had commenced, uncontrollable. There has always been a strong demand for vocational training, and this in itself may be legitimate; but now the way had been opened for contending that since higher education in a democracy should be, and has been made by us, the privilege of the populace, it should include whatever the populace may want and can receive. We end, not by transforming the populace, as we had intended, but by transforming education. And *Wissenschaft* in itself, as our experience shows, provides no real defense against this process of degeneration, but on the contrary has facilitated it. How far it has gone, and with what results, was indicated in the first article of this series, but another illustration may here be added to show just what has happened to colleges of liberal arts. Mr. Robert L. Kelly writes, in a volume entitled *The Effective College* which he edited in 1928 for the Association of American Colleges: "The curriculum in part or in whole is being constructed for, with, and by *the student.* The purpose of the college is to help the student and the curriculum becomes an individual affair.* . . . The college is organized to teach students rather than subjects". And Mr. Kelly, to exhibit the result, continues: "At the University of Minnesota the undergraduate work is *largely prevocational.* . . . Special courses [in the College of Science, Literature, and Arts] are announced as follows: Training for State and Federal Administration; Training for Diplomatic and Consular Service; Training for Hospital Library Service; Training for Medical Technicians; Preventive Medicine and Public Health; Training for Social and Civic Work; Military Science and Tactics; Arts and Music; Combined Course in Arts and Medicine (7 years); Combined Course in Arts and Dentistry (7 years); Combined Course in Arts and Nursing (5 years); Combined Course in Arts and Architecture (6 years); Combined Course in Arts and Interior Decoration (4 years); Preprofessional Training".

Confusion could scarcely further go;—and the truth is that, by the path of descent outlined above, the colleges have reached the point where they are ready to meet any demand made on them, if only it is made insistently. Their real criterion is embodied in the question, "Will it pay for itself? Can the money for it be found without causing too grave a deficit?" Short of, not a deficit, but too large a deficit, they are prepared to undertake anything.* It is just as if the colleges felt they no longer had a good excuse for existence and were glad to hear of any new one that might be offered. The attempt to become all things to all students is, in fact, an act of desperation—and an unsuccessful one—for it has brought down on the colleges the penalty that might have been expected. There is no principle, no program, no kind of education for which the colleges now stand. If one can judge from much observation, the only thing that any college faculty could unanimously agree to recommend at this time would be higher salaries for themselves. Many and varied illustrations could be given to confirm the information from Minnesota and the damaging admissions of Mr. Kelly—but there is no need. As everybody really knows, no one can say

* President Wilkins of Oberlin College writes: "The word 'curriculum' has no proper modern significance except as designating a course of study created anew for each individual student. No two students bring to college the same background, the same experience, the same achievement in knowledge; and no two students face the same future of work and leisure. We have no right to do less than to study with the utmost care each individual record and each individual prospect, and to plan the individual curriculum in accordance with the results of that study". (Article in *Higher Education in America*, edited by President R. A. Kent, 1930.)

* There are, of course, honorable exceptions. Scarcely any general statement about our educational institutions can be made to which there are no exceptions. I believe the picture here drawn, however, is faithful to the facts, taking the situation as a whole.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

what the degree of bachelor of arts now means beyond a certain minimum number of hours safely passed in various college rooms, and perhaps in a swimming pool, by a secondary-school graduate.

Often the worst abuses come about so gradually and imperceptibly that good and able men are the willing agents of them. Each step by itself seems so natural or so necessary that it is taken without misgiving, and the final destination is foreseen by no one. Even when it is reached it may not be at once recognized for what it is, because good intentions have paved the way. I think the present condition of the great majority of our colleges of liberal arts would be perfectly incredible to anyone who knew nothing of their history during the last hundred years, but who did know something about education. I have been concerned with some part of their history, not only because it does make the present situation credible, and in a sense reasonable, but also because it enables one to see why the colleges have been the center from which confusion has spread out through our universities, and why there can now be no real question of "reforming" them.

What is required is their dissolution; and they are in fact inwardly dissolved, as we have seen, and their husks are being discarded, and nothing can prevent continuance of the process. But as things are, it is slow, unpremeditated, haphazard, intermittent, wasteful, blind—like other natural processes. And we may be in danger of forgoing important advantages such as frequently follow from intelligently planned efforts to control and direct the course of nature—as in irrigation, for example—if we fail to understand and use our present opportunities.

One important benefit which would immediately result from the dissolution of the colleges would be the shifting of different kinds of study to the places where they properly belong—since the common dumping-ground for miscellaneous odds and ends of academic requirements would no longer exist. And this would mean that, in general, the work of junior and senior years in pure science, in language and literature, in philosophy, in history, economics, political theory, and the other studies now often collectively termed the social sciences would be shifted to the faculty of philosophy, at present usually called the graduate school of arts and sciences. This would bring together under one faculty all advanced studies of non-professional and non-vocational character, demanding specialization, and leading to the degrees of M.A. and Ph.D. It would make possible real unity of spirit and of aim throughout the school. It would permit of a single standard of performance for all university work, and of a single standard by which all members of the faculty could be measured. It should be easily possible to confine membership to serious and qualified students and to make real accomplishment the price of academic success. It should equally be possible to establish quality, not quantity, as the criterion in use throughout the institution. If we need universities at all, we need real ones; and real universities prosper or fail, succeed or sink into insignificance, in proportion as their studies, not their students, are regarded as of paramount importance. This is fully realized in our more reputable graduate schools. It is only in the undergraduate colleges that the opposed point of view of Mr. Robert L. Kelly prevails;—and it there prevails obviously because the aims of the colleges have become so diverse, so contradictory, so indefensible, so dissipated, that no one can say what they are, so that men have turned to the student as the only real object in sight. But this is, of course, a false kindness—in reality a betrayal of the student as well as of society—and in the extended graduate school here proposed a qualitative criterion should mean that knowledge was the end held in view, steadily, uncompromisingly, to the subordination of all other considerations.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

How great and how beneficial a change this would be can only be understood when it is remembered that a "college education" is regarded as almost the birthright of every American youth, that all kinds are freely admitted, in almost all stages of unpreparedness, that the majority of institutions want as many students as possible, and try to give them as extensive and varied a range of choices as possible, and that in order to facilitate their passage through the mill the "credit-hour" system has been devised, which reduces and divides responsibility for passing judgment on students to the point where no one seriously feels it, and which encourages students to regard an education as something definable in terms of simple arithmetical calculations. Under these circumstances, lazy, stupid, and aimless students are always present in force, and tend to set the pace of instruction. Yet the instruction given is supposed to be of university grade, the courses of the upper-class years are supposed to be "advanced" courses, and the methods of teaching usually followed are those appropriate to graduate work. The result, of course, is a parody. Nothing more wasteful, and unsuccessful, can easily be imagined.

Instructors, moreover, are in an impossible situation under present conditions. On the one hand, they are forced to give as many different "courses" as they possibly can; they are often judged, to a greater extent than anyone will admit, on the basis of student gossip; they are openly judged, to a very large extent, by the *number* of students they teach, and by the *amount* of work, measured in hours, that they can place to their credit; and they constantly have it impressed on them that they are hired teachers, subject to orders, with uncertain tenure, and with their futures dependent on the good will of their "Heads". Departments of instruction in a number of our better colleges, it may be explained, are organized as committees, with a chairman who cares as little for authority over others as would be expected in a man interested primarily in things intellectual; but in the majority of institutions there stands over each department a "Head" appointed by the administration and entrusted with the direct control of departmental affairs. Some of these "Heads" are excellent and conscientious men, who accept administrative posts reluctantly, resigning themselves to the necessities of a complicated and unwieldy machinery. Others, however, are, like minor public officials everywhere, puffed up by a little authority, and become petty tyrants, jealous, fearful, and unscrupulous. They are very likely to get the notion that the university consists peculiarly of themselves; and they can be counted on to see to it that no one gets a post in their departments who would be likely to challenge them or to invite comparisons unfavorable to them.

But these subservient instructors, on the other hand, are all supposed to be "authorities" composing an "institute of knowledge". And while they may at any time lose their jobs if they are not primarily industrious and "inspiring" teachers, able to amuse and impress their immature auditors, they may also fail to win promotion if they are not primarily industrious and learned scholars, able frequently to publish contributions to knowledge. Of course, when every man on a university faculty is supposed to be equally well fitted to do every kind of work, from elementary teaching to the most advanced graduate instruction, and beyond that to the direction of the writing of dissertations and to productive scholarship or scientific research, the results are negligible all along the line. Some instructors—probably an increasing number of them—are men primarily interested in the pursuit of knowledge, who under favorable conditions might become capable, if not great, scholars and scientists. They are encouraged to think that in accepting collegiate posts they are entering—especially if the college is part of a university—on an intellectual way of life; and it is a fact, as has just been said, that if they are

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not able to simulate the appearances of such a way of life, by means of publications, they are not likely to obtain advancement. But in practice they find that they must chiefly occupy themselves with elementary teaching, with some teaching of university grade added as a favor, in competition with men whose principal aim is student-goodwill, and whose lectures resemble something between an after-dinner speech and an "entertainment" at a ladies' club. The time not thus expended is usually taken up with committee work, of which there is a large amount producing small results,* or with farcical advisory activities. These activities are farcical because, although they are thought to be necessary, they are distributed amongst men already overburdened, and are perforce confined in many cases to the mere signing of a card on certain stated occasions—a procedure which scarcely even satisfies appearances.† Instructors, consequently, give practically all of their time to work in which the most valuable of them are not primarily interested, for which they are not best fitted, and to which, as things are, they cannot honestly attach much importance;—with the natural consequence that they never fulfil their promise, never become competent scholars, and never engage in other than trivial scholarly, scientific, or literary work. They become disappointed men, thinking much as they grow older about the problem of holding their jobs, living more and more, not in the world of ideas, but in the world of gossip, and devising futile and absurd methods of bolstering their self-importance.

These men may be counted on to cooperate with their "Heads" in exhausting every means within their power to oppose the creation of real universities, whether by the method proposed in these papers or by any other method. They constitute at present, nearly everywhere, the faculty of the graduate school of arts and sciences as well as the faculty of the undergraduate college, occupying both positions at once, as previously explained, and often performing the duties of both in one and the same class or "course". They know well enough that, whatever their original promise, time has made them incompetent to hold real university posts and to fulfil real university duties. Many, too, never were even potentially competent for such posts. Hence, while they are themselves a strong argument for change, it could scarcely be expected that they would not fight every effort to divest our paper-universities of pretence. A member of the Ohio legislature a year or so ago candidly explained the purpose of a bill, supported by the dominant political organization of the state, which was designed to remove a group of minor offices from the civil service, by saying, "We want the jobs". The teachers under discussion can say, "We have the jobs", and such evidence as there is suggests that bitter resentment will be aroused by any reforming efforts—even efforts not involving injury to present incumbents—because a spirit quite similar to the candid legislator's, of determination to possess themselves of everything in sight, animates a not inconsiderable number of them.

If, however, it should be granted that we do stand in need of real universities as a vital part of the social structure which sustains civilization, and if it should be granted that the several changes proposed in these papers are necessary to their well-being, and indeed to their existence, the question at once arises,

* I have been told of one committee, appointed to consider the functions of a college of liberal arts, which, after many meetings, laborious investigation, and much hearing of testimony, succeeded at the end of twelve months in bringing in a unanimous report recommending certain changes in the entrance requirements of the college and certain changes in the rules governing sabbatical leaves of absence.

† Sometimes, to be sure, like other parts of complex academic machinery, although advisory activities cannot serve the purpose for which they were designed, they can be made to serve different purposes. A sentence from W. Johnson Cory's *Hints for Eton Masters* will illustrate the *kind* of thing that can be done: "Perhaps the nastiest and lowest thing I have observed in masters is a fixed determination to give no encouragement to the pupils of a particular tutor".

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What is to become of liberal education? Generally speaking, when higher education reappeared in Western Europe in the later Middle Ages, it maintained itself only on the level of vocational training. Society then was more completely organized than it is now—as it is also more completely organized in savage communities and in "petrified civilizations" than in ours—and the need for higher education arose only out of the developing requirements of certain recognized callings. It was during the Renaissance that the ideal of liberal education was revived—and this was, indeed, probably the most important achievement of those responsible for the Renaissance. For it gave a vital impulse and profound seriousness to the attempt to recover the elements of classical civilization in their integrity, at the sources, and so made possible an understanding of Greek thought which alone brought about the rise of modern science and the development of our civilization. The central importance of liberal education in this development has sometimes been obscured, for various reasons—one of them being a tendency to confuse it with non-essentials or merely temporary expedients—but it has never been wholly lost sight of, so that from the end of the fifteenth century to our day institutions of liberal education have been maintained in the Western world, and have held a place of high esteem in the public mind.

And in America the home of liberal education has been the college. Is it, then, to be inferred from the proposal to dissolve colleges in the interest of universities that liberal education has served its term?—that its usefulness has been outlived, that it has become obsolete, and that we now have something better to take its place?

Something of this sort has often been said, not alone in recent years; though during the last half-century or more there has been special reason for expecting questions about the value of liberal studies. In a time of rapid change, social, economic, technological, and scientific, and of great perplexity, every kind of question is bound to be asked. We have noticed that the schools have mirrored the age in their experimental fumbling, and they have done so because they have been the targets for some of the age's questions, and because hasty, confident answers have been pressed upon them.

It appears to be the fact, however, that only negligible writers, taking advantage of the prejudices of ignorant people, or really fancying that the "march of progress" had brought us a completely new deal and that the future of mankind was to be utterly different from the past—and entirely severed from it—have demanded that we forsake liberal education for something supposedly better. None of the more responsible recent critics of the American college with whose work I am acquainted has made any proposal of the kind. It is Dr. Flexner's belief that he has always been a supporter of liberal education, and it is transparently his intention to promote it in his *Universities*. And it is precisely because our colleges are not at present the homes of liberal education, and cannot by minor reforms be made the homes of liberal education, that I propose their dissolution. The step is needed, is indeed essential, for our universities; at the same time it is apparently the one thing that may make possible the revival of genuinely liberal study as an integral part of our plan of higher education.

How this may come about I shall later show; but first, if there is really no reason to doubt that liberal education is wanted, as much in our day as ever—and I think there is none—it is still necessary to ask what it is. For concerning it there is a good deal of misunderstanding.

Ultimately all conceptions of liberal education depend on a belief in the possibility of the good man. There is such a thing as excellence. There are excellent mechanics and poor ones; there are excellent lawyers and poor ones—excellent paper-hangers, physi-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cians, house-painters, violinists, engineers, nurses, silversmiths, philologers—and poor ones too. In every calling there is a possible excellence which occasionally is attained, while below it there is a wide range of mediocrity—where the greatest number stand—terminating in a lowest level of inexpertness. And we not only can distinguish these levels, learning definitely what it is to be an excellent lawyer or whatever, but we can also elaborate with considerable success a training appropriate for producing lawyers, and a best training, well calculated to produce excellent ones whenever there is the possibility of lawyer-like excellence in the material furnished. There are great differences, of course; —in some callings training is more necessary, and easier to provide, than in others; and, in some, excellence is much more generally attainable than in others. But on the whole what has been said represents the facts, and will not be denied. Every lawyer, mechanic, paper-hanger, however, is something more than simply—shall we say?—his social function. He is also a man, and a citizen. And is there not a specifically human excellence, and can we not learn something about that, and provide any training calculated to bring it out, if a man has it in him?

It is a natural question, and an old one;—though it implies a stage of reflection which men do not reach quickly or easily. Once it is asked, however, there can be only one answer; for the facts are plain, and among them the fact that to be an excellent lawyer or an excellent mechanic is not the same as to be an excellent man. This, moreover, makes clear a part of the answer: Men's callings, whatever they may be, are not the ends for which they should live. And this is generally recognized. The man who is so much a banker that he is nothing else may be an excellent banker, so that we may want to do business with him, but we are bound to feel and be repelled by his lack of humanity, and to discover that his business is all he is good for—all he *is*. We reach the right conclusion about this whenever we can look at it disinterestedly. Bankers are thought of as wealthy beings, influential, solid, leading citizens, yet independent, able to do as they please. They are in the place where a great many men want to be, so that the temptation is great to shut one's eyes against the evidence—to suppose that an invisible humanity must be lurking somewhere beneath the hard surface and the apparently stupid life of the too expert banker. But take another case—think of the maker of dictionaries. His is a calling as useful as banking, and perhaps more important. Yet if he is so much a lexicographer as to subdue himself wholly to his task of travelling through "the dusty deserts of barren philology"—while we may thank God devoutly for his dictionary, still, we cannot doubt that he is scarcely a man, that he has sacrificed himself to an object not worth so great a price to him. Who has not been enlivened by the touches of humanity, trivial though they are in themselves, which Dr. Johnson could not help admitting to the pages of his dictionary? It is not a better dictionary for those touches—a worse, rather —yet we would not have them out. We value Dr. Johnson himself, with a shrewd sense of the truth of this matter, more than all his works. And we know that it was a man, not a mere lexicographer, who could look upon his years of labor with sufficient detachment to dismiss their fruits to the world "with frigid tranquillity". Quite similarly, again, today, though an industrious philologer, Professor Malone, of Johns Hopkins, has told us that Mr. H. W. Fowler's *Dictionary of Modern English Usage* is the work of a mere amateur, peppered with vulnerable statements, we would not think of giving it up for anything that the mere "specialist" could offer in substitution, because it carries within it the full flavor of a rich humanity which makes it, though a dictionary of a sort, a precious gift from man to man.

Our recognitions of important truths may be, like ourselves, very imperfect, taking on

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

trivial forms, and yet may be none the less real. Why are men in the world of business —why are all our modern "specialists"— so commonly urged by their friends to cultivate hobbies? The desire is to save them from themselves; to give them some abiding means of drawing out and, as it were, exercising their humanity, so as to keep it from withering away under the exclusive preoccupation with business. The feeling is that *any* "extra-activity", pursued for its own sake, is better than none;—no matter how empty the interest it excites, it at least secures a measure of real detachment from "affairs", and to that extent makes the lawyer or plumber or banker or economist with a hobby a free man, not valuable like a machine simply for the work he can be made to do, but valuable like a man for what he *is*.

Now be it observed that the convictions I speak of are sound only as far as they go. Already I can see Brother Ass, sodden with *echte Linguistik*, turning about heavily to bray: "Your precious humanity, then, comes to this—it's a mere cloak for laziness, for ignorance, for slipshod work, for the criminal spread of misinformation". But, dear Brother, I meant only what I wrote, not something more, not something different. It is, let us say, illegitimate to assume that unless what I write suits you, I must have meant by it something absurd, something that I did not write. I agree unqualifiedly that Mr. Fowler's *Dictionary* would be better did it contain nothing that Professor Malone and others like him could pick at; but Professor Malone's objections are in fact trifling, are not even serious collectively, are of the kind that only a "specialist" who had lost all sense of proportion would attempt to magnify, and are not, accordingly, a sufficient basis for condemning the book. On the contrary, they suggest that if no more can be said against it, the sensible conclusion probably should be that the book is an excellent one *for its professed purpose*; and something of this kind Professor Malone, indeed, patronizingly admits before he is through.* Hence it would be undesirable to accept a substituted work by a mere "specialist" in place of Mr. Fowler's book, because it would in truth be very little better, while it would certainly lack the humanity of the excellent *Dictionary of Modern English Usage*.

And similarly I have not asserted that any mere hobby will really suffice to liberalize a physician or a mechanic. But we can, nevertheless, see in these very common perceptions and beliefs of which I have been speaking, the germs from which may be developed a true conception of human excellence—a human excellence which has been realized, and which can be realized again. The good man, then—distinguished as a man from the good lawyer, the good painter, the good engineer, and the rest—is one who is free, within, of course, the limits of earthly possibility;—one who is, in other words, the master of himself, who is not the slave of another, or of his calling, or of things. He is one who, consequently, through this detachment from "affairs", from the multitudinous demands of the outer world, is able to cultivate and to maintain a due sense of proportion. Hence he will not undervalue action and, though tolerant of frailty, he will not be blind to it, or condone it. For he will know that what is worth doing at all is worth doing well, as the old saying has it. The question, What *is* worth doing? will not always be an easy one to answer, but the good man will be better able than others to answer it. For the cultivation and maintenance of a due sense of proportion is equivalent to the formation of a philosophical temper or habit of mind, enlightened, sure, and discriminating, which may adequately serve as the instrument of a never-ending process of critical evaluation in terms of that perfection of being at which the good man will aim, though even he will not attain it. Thus it may be said that the good man is one whose distinctively human

* His review is to be found in *Modern Language Notes*, vol. 42, p. 201.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

characteristics are highly and symmetrically developed.

Much is implied in this which need not now be pursued. I must, however, add that there is a certain danger in the attempt—not to draw a glowing picture of some man who might partially illustrate human excellence, and so might strike the imagination and kindle the feelings—but to state abstractly certain fundamental conditions which must be fulfilled in order to the realization of the best possibilities of life. That is necessary to the present purpose, but it is unfortunately a fact that present-day life and much contemporary literature proclaim the conviction that not goodness, but enjoyment, is the end of existence, and that these two are completely opposed to each other; that not contemplation or a condition of the soul, but perpetual activity, is the fulfillment of life, and that these two are completely opposed to each other; that not the judicious nature, but the impulsive nature, is to be cultivated, and that these two are completely opposed to each other; that not definition and construction, but endless experimentation, is the appropriate endeavor for man, and that these two are completely opposed to each other. We know, indeed, that the means of the more obvious enjoyments have been organized into a vast business, and that literature also has become a business, and that such businesses are dependent upon the success of their appeals to the vulgar; but this alone scarcely accounts for the insistent domination in our time of what can only be called an adolescent state of mind. And the underlying secret of the evil phenomenon is rather to be found in the pestilent specialism which was settled on us before we had become aware of it by the overwhelming increase of knowledge, or of what passes for knowledge, in the last century. Its consequences when uncontrolled are just what Cardinal Newman stated them to be in the third Discourse of his *Idea of a University*: "The devotees of any science, or family of sciences, to the exclusion of others, . . . necessarily become bigots and quacks, scorning all principles and reported facts which do not belong to their own pursuit, and thinking to effect everything without aid from any other quarter".

It is precisely this deformity, this one-sidedness producing bigots and quacks and their adolescent thought, that liberal education is designed to counteract. Hence it is not merely a danger, it is a certainty, that any attempt to state abstractly certain fundamental conditions of human excellence will be greeted by the bigots and quacks with derision. People despise a refinement and maturity of which they have no experience. "Men in general cannot imagine what they have seen no example of." But, on the other hand, it is not at all surprising that the very growth and prevalence of the race of bigots and quacks should have brought into being amongst sober men an increasingly wide-spread conviction that we need nothing more at this time than a revival of liberal education. For a liberal education is simply a discipline calculated to train up fitly a society of free men. It was once described as the education of a gentleman, and that is still probably its best description, and may perhaps safely be used again, now that the suspicion is evidently gaining ground that the race of true gentlemen were not really whited sepulchres, and that indeed we suffer grievously from their extinction. But the essential element was rightly emphasized by Mark Pattison in his essay on *Oxford Studies*: "A perfect liberal education", he wrote, "and the formation of a good judgment or philosophical temper are identical, and it is for the sake of this greatest and noblest of human products, that an institution for the higher education employs knowledge".

If this is liberal education, it is not—it cannot be, in truth—doubtful that we want it, more in our day than ever. The only real question concerns, not the thing, but the right means to attain it. And to this question I shall turn in my third paper.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

GEORGE W. CABLE

A NEW ENGLANDER IN THE SOUTH

by Margaret Bloom

Some years ago in Northampton, Massachusetts, one often saw an elegant gentleman riding his bicycle along the streets of the old town. His slender build, his delicate features and pointed gray beard gave him a look of fine porcelain fragility. His appearance suggested that he should proceed on his way seated in an open carriage, behind fat old horses driven by a colored coachman. But, instead, he pedalled along, briskly propelled by his own efforts. This glimpse seems typical of the man, the New Englander who had been for a while uprooted and transplanted to be a Southerner of New Orleans. In cases such as this, when an individual temperamentally belonging to the North is transplanted southward, and *vice versa*, one is bound to wonder how far the conflict under happy circumstances may produce literary self-expression. Sometimes it results in a tragic thwarting of lives; in the case of George W. Cable it may have been instrumental in stirring his creative power to expression.

For during the whole of his career as a novelist, in the later and less vivid novels written many years after he had left New Orleans for New England, with the exception of *Bylow Hill*, there is the same preoccupation with those aspects of the South which first gave him the material for his regional novels. George W. Cable's *Life and Letters*, by his daughter, Mrs. Bikle, records a prophetic sentence written by Professor Boyesen of Cornell University in 1877, concerning *The Grandissimes*: "Yours is going to be the kind of novel which the Germans call a *Kultur roman*, a novel in which two struggling forces of opposing civilizations crystallize and in which they find their enduring monument".

George W. Cable was himself a native of New Orleans, but his character seems to have been moulded by that of his mother, born in Indiana, but descended on both sides from New England Puritans. She was, it is clear, a woman of great energy and intellectual ambition, possessed of an heroic spirit which was called into full play during her widowhood. Then, "by exertions that seemed like a daily and nightly self-destruction, prolonged through years, she . . . kept her children clothed, sheltered and in school". That her personality was out of tune with the leisurely spirit of the old South, and especially with that of the Creoles of New Orleans, is to be seen in the fact that "she had no such intolerance for anything else in life as she had for a spirit of indolence, whether it leaned towards ease or pleasure".

Cable's inherent variance with the South and her people showed itself throughout his life: First, in his presentation of the Creoles; second, in his attitude towards slavery and the Negro question; and, third and fourth, of lesser importance, in his attitude towards

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the Civil War, and in connection with prison and asylum reform in the South.

Nowhere is Cable's greatest literary achievement, the presentation of the Creoles, more successful than in *The Grandissimes*, undoubtedly the best of his novels, which has as its background New Orleans in 1803. Cable himself felt that *Old Creole Days* was approved above its comparative merit because it was the first work by which he became known, and that the question of highest merit should lie between *Dr. Sevier* and *The Grandissimes*. The heroine of *The Grandissimes*, Aurora Nancanou, speaking a half-French, half-English patois of the greatest charm, is one of the most appealing and fascinating ladies of American fiction. The hero, M. Honoré Grandissime, is the flower of the great clan of the Grandissimes and possibly the last one, for, as Dr. Keene expresses it, the strength that was once in the intellect and will of the family is going down into the muscles. The moral weakness and potential ferocity of the race is laid bare in the characterization of the dashing old rake, Agricola Fusilier, and in the vicious murder of the Negress, Clemence, by certain young Grandissimes. An episode of the novel is the heart-rending story of Bras-Coupé, inspired by Cable's reading of the old Black Code, for, with his characteristic studiousness he had made a deep study of Southern local history and of the city archives of New Orleans.

M. Honoré Grandissime (he has a dark half-brother of the same name), who sees his environment and the weaknesses of his race very clearly, says:

"Mr. Frowenfeld, it is of no use to talk; you may hold in contempt the Creole scorn of toil —just as I do, myself, but in theory, my-de'-seh, not too much in practice. You cannot afford to be *entirely* different to the community in which you live: is that not so?"

"A friend of mine," said Frowenfeld, "has told me I must 'compromise'."

"You must get acclimated," responded the Creole; "not in body only, that you have done; but in mind—in taste—in conversation—and in convictions too, yes, ha, ha! They all do it—all who come. They hold out a little while—a very little; then they open their stores on Sunday, they import cargoes of Africans, they bribe the officials, they smuggle goods, they have colored housekeepers. My-de'-seh, the water must expect to take the shape of the bucket; eh?"

"One need not be water!" said the immigrant.

"Ah!" said the Creole, with another amiable shrug, and a wave of his hand; "certainly you do not suppose that is my advice—that those things have my approval."

Cable records that young Frowenfeld's eyes had in them a shade of gravity deepened by a certain look of excess—in books; "a most unusual look in New Orleans in those days, and pointedly out of keeping with the scene which was absorbing his attention". In addition to the Creoles' determined ignorance Cable notes in *The Grandissimes* their propensity to "suicidal pride", family feuds and duelling. Old M. De Grapion, the hereditary enemy of the Grandissimes, makes the mistake of marrying his daughter to a son-in-law, also the last of his name. "In Louisiana a man needs kinfolk. He ought to have married his daughter into a strong house." The dying words of the old fire-eater, Agricola Fusilier, are these: "Oh, Honoré, you and the Yankees — you and — all — going wrong—education—masses—weaken—caste —indiscr—quarrels settl'—by affidav'—Oh! Honoré".

The position of the quadroons and octoroons in the Creole social organization is shocking to Cable, the New Englander, particularly in the case of the women of mixed blood, who were often extraordinarily beautiful and considered as legitimate victims. In *Madame Delphine,* one of the stories in the volume, *Old Creole Days*, a young girl with a slight intermixture of Negro blood, through her mother's sacrifice, is married to Monsieur Vignevielle, rich and kind but somewhat *déclassé* because of an episode of piracy in his

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

life. This situation and its solution are, it is clear, presented for their romantic value, not in advocacy of miscegenation. Incidentally, in *Madame Delphine* the good priest is presented most sympathetically, as is also the case in *Bonaventure*, and in all Cable's tales of Creole life.

After the passing of slavery Cable was concerned with the educational, industrial, and political status of the Negro in the South. He felt that "there is sufficient antagonism between races to keep them, in the main, pure, without the aid of onerous civil distinctions", and was in no sense an advocate of what is known as social equality. In *John March, Southerner,* the mulatto Leggett typifies the unscrupulous and demagogic Negro politician, a class which did much to make the reconstruction days an unforgettable nightmare in the South.

It is in *Dr. Sevier* that Cable deals most directly with needed prison reform in the South. To the reader of the novel, however, the characterizations seem of more importance than any underlying thesis. Cable's own early efforts for civic betterment, involving an interest in the condition of insane asylums as well as prisons, are reflected in the activities of Philip Castleton, the hero of *Lovers of Louisiana,* on the Grand Jury and elsewhere.

George Cable, at nineteen years of age, after the capture of New Orleans, served in the Confederate army. He was a good soldier, "scrupulously observant of discipline, always at his post, and always courageous and daring". From the first, however, he seems to have been doubtful as to the right of secession. He felt that the Confederacy was fighting to establish a scheme of government that would work its own destruction, for it would go to pieces as soon as it was safe from outside enemies. He fought because a citizen of the Confederacy, "a soldier by its laws, sworn into service and ordered, not to think, but to fight". Cable's statement in *Dr. Sevier* to the Northern soldiers marching down Broadway in 1861 that their cause was just, and that we of the South can now say it, aroused some opposition.

In 1882, in an address to the graduating class of the University of Mississippi, Cable made a plea for the necessity and value of regarding Southern literature from a national point of view, of incorporating it into American literature, as Hawthorne, Emerson, Bret Harte and Poe are incorporated. "Let us cease," he said, "to be a unique people. . . . We want to write, as well as read, our share of the nation's literature." This same idea is presented in his masterpiece, *The Grandissimes.* The Grandissime family has had the last words of the stubborn old Creole, Agricola Fusilier, cut on his tomb. These last words are "Louisiana forever!"

> And yet the family committee that ordered the inscription, the mason who cut it in the marble—himself a sort of half-Grandissime, half-nobody—and even the fair women who each eve of All Saints' came, attended by flower-laden slave girls, to lay coronals upon the old man's tomb, felt, feebly at first, and more and more distinctly as years went by, that Forever was a trifle long for one to confine one's patriotic affection to a small fraction of a great country.

New Englander though he was by temperament, after many years of residence in the North, Cable called his now house at Northampton "Tarryawhile", because "A Southerner who has lived over forty years of his life on the shore of the Gulf of Mexico, finds an appropriateness, when he makes a home two thousand miles away, in saying in his mind, if not in his mouth, 'I'm a pilgrim and a stranger and can tarry but a night' ". He was, then, not quite a Northerner, nor yet quite a Southerner, and the resultant inner conflict may well have been the source and inspiration of his creative work, that work at its best of such unique appeal and charm that it has scarcely been surpassed in the course of American literature.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ESSAYS IN GRAMMAR

II. THE ADJECTIVE AND THE ADVERB

by Janet Rankin Aiken

Not long ago a friend of mine wrote in what she considered the best modern manner a story for children. She took the story to an editor who she knew wanted such stories and whose personal acquaintance with her justified her in some expectation of human kindliness. The editor read the story through in the disconcertingly brief way editors have. Then he reached for his blue pencil. Without a word he ran a line through every adjective in the story. Then he turned and beamed upon my friend.

"Now," said he, with the simplicity of the really great mind, "this will do."

Why is the adjective today under a cloud? Why are students advised against its use, warned to favor the sturdy noun and the stark verb in its stead? In a manual of instructions for inexperienced writers, issued by one of the greater universities, I find "the work of skilled writers shows that verbs and nouns contribute more than adjectives in giving a reader a vivid and real impression of the author's sensations or the sensations he imagines a character in a story to have". And such quotations might be multiplied indefinitely. Yet in that very quotation, as it seems to me, the key words are *skilled*, *vivid*, and *real*, all adjectives. This question of the modifier will bear looking into.

Analysts of the school of Vernon Lee have proved, by weary counting, that Pater, Henry James and their kind favor the adjective more than do Kipling, Jack London, Robert Louis Stevenson and *their* kind. The tribe of Stevenson presents in its stories a sense of swift action; the class of Pater does not. But the present age is an age of action. Ergo, the conclusion is clear: the Adjective Must Go! This, in thoughts of one syllable, seems to be the notion of the statistical analyst of literary style.

Even granting that London uses more nouns and verbs than Henry James or Edith Wharton, we are perhaps justified in inquiring whether literary art is to be measured by the thriller standard. Was London really a more skilled writer than Pater? Possibly his pen earned him more, but then the word should be *affluent*, or *well-fed*, not *skilled*.

There is another approach to the adjective story. I believe some of these adjective-scorners have a subtle hangover from the grammar of their elementary grades.

Think back if you can to the time when you first learned about adjectives, verbs, nouns, and the other compositives of the sentence. Do you recall the general pattern you learned there? The sentence was a thing built essentially out of a subject and a predicate. The subject was a noun, the predicate in essence a verb. The game of grammar began and continued by taking a sentence (for

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

example, the first one in this article) and picking out its subject (*friend*) and its verb (*wrote*). And if you knew enough you could go on and pick out also the direct object (*story*).

These three—subject, verb, object—were the headliners in the cast of the sentence, as you learned it in the grades. The subject and object were nouns, the verb was a verb. Noun and verb, then, were king and queen of the sentence kingdom.

The king and queen had retainers called adjectives and adverbs. These latter depended upon them or, in the quaintly romantic terminology of grammar, were governed by them. You used to draw little pictures showing the adjective hanging from its noun, the adverb depending from its verb. These pictures, you felt, expressed the very essence of the English language. You called the picture-making process "diagramming a sentence".

Let us apply a match to the sentence diagram and see what happens.

I shall begin innocently enough by asking you which is Bob Fawcett's house. You reply, "It's the house painted white with green shutters, the house just beyond the bank".

Now let us analyze that reply of yours. Subject, *it*; verb, *is*; complement, *house, house*. Or, as one might say, king, *it*; queen, *is*; Mussolini, *house, house*.

But say, "It is house, house". It tells me nothing about Bob Fawcett, nothing about what I asked to find out. The actual information I requested totally escapes me. That information, the heart of the sentence, inheres in the adjective elements, in *painted white with green shutters; just beyond the bank*. Indeed, if you were in a tearing hurry you might just gasp out these adjective phrases as your full reply, and I should understand you readily. I should never miss *it is house, house*.

Again, you are at the seashore, and Junior comes dashing up in the sandy way he has, and shouts, "The man caught a great big fish, that long!"

Analyze that sentence and you get *man caught fish*. Tell that to Junior, and the verve, the *élan*, will depart from him. He would never dash up sandily to tell you *man caught fish*. Put in that way, it's not worth the saying.

It may reasonably be contended that the adjective is normally a more important speech element than its noun, in that it defines or gives point and sharpness to what was before a vaguer, more general idea. We may say *books* without any very great mental upheaval, but *old books, rare books*, are phrases to conjure with. By itself *school* does not mean so very much; we want to know, is it *grade school, art school, graduate school, high school*, or what not?

You probably remember that the modifier was diagrammed as "subordinate" to its "governing" word, thus: horses.{black, very} Would not the psychological facts be better served by the diagram{very, black, horses}? These questions need thinking out. Certainly the traditional grammar of English should not be permitted to have things all its own way in this matter. Certainly the romantic words *modify, govern, subordinate, superior, secondary, dependent*, and so on, should be scrutinized closely to see whether they are not too romantic to be true.

Take any one of your favorite quotations, and rewrite it, omitting the modifiers. Leave only the aristocracy of the sentences—the subjects, verbs, and objects. And now what have you? Not, I will wager, your favorite quotation.

Out of a certain two lines from *Antony and Cleopatra* you would get

The seas incarnadine
Making one.

Out of another two lines, from *Macbeth*

Out, out, candle;
Life's but a shadow, a player.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Can anyone consider these mutilated remnants superior to the originals?

I have a suspicion that good writing is good writing irrespective of the proportion in which the various parts of speech are mixed. What the writer has is ideas; they shape themselves into words and sentences, and if the writer is good enough, they mix themselves according to the "pattern showed thee in the Mount", according to the innate sense of rightness and fitness which is perhaps the most indispensable part of the writer's equipment.

I believe the style-physicians do badly to recommend an artificial régime like omitting adjectives from the diet as a cure for composition ills. Tell us if you like, gentlemen, what the parts of speech are—that verbs are action words, nouns naming words, and adjectives definers or sharpeners for nouns. But do not advise us to forego the adjectives.

Having arrived at this sound conclusion, let us inquire into the reason for the remarkable fact that the eschewers of the adjective never mention the other modifier, the adverb. The latter is just as much a modifier as the former—indeed more so, since adjectives modify only nouns, while adverbs are found with anything—and it seems as if any condemnation of one must condemn the other likewise. Yet adverbs go free.

Perhaps our style-shepherds feel semi-consciously that to make a literary scapegoat of the adverb would leave us too poor a supply of grammatical sheep within the fold. You can't do everything with nouns, verbs, and connectives. After all, one must allow some latitude, even to the budding author. So the adverb is tacitly approved.

There may be yet another reason for permitting the adverb, another hangover from our elementary days. You recall that the adjective was almost the first part of speech you studied, but the adverb came much further back in the book, hitting you in the eye just when you were exhausted from the long struggle with verbs. It may be that the mentors of literary style are not quite sure what an adverb is, and feel that least said is soonest mended.

I myself think I know fairly well what a modifier is, but if you were to ask me point-blank what is the difference between the adjectives and the adverb I should find myself stuttering. My ignorance does not arise from lack of thought; I have searched diligently for some means of telling these two apart, and thus far my search has gone unrewarded.

Of course I do not allude to the distinction between slow in *slow horse*, and *go slow* (or *slowly* if you like), where the first is obviously adjective, the second adverb. I want, for example, light on the sentences *true seeing is seeing charitably* and *charitable seeing is seeing truly*, where the same word *seeing* takes adjective and adverb indiscriminately. Is *seeing* a noun or a verb? Functionally, of course, it is a noun; yet how can a noun associate itself with an adverb?

Then there is *precisely* in *precisely what I wanted lay there*. Now *precisely* does not modify any word in its sentence; it modifies the clause *what I wanted*, taken as an indivisible unit. As a unit this clause is a noun, the subject of *lay*. Here again, then, we have an adverb modifying a noun, in the teeth of all the grammar books.

I think I can explain *three* in *he walked three miles*. While the word *miles* which it modifies is an adverb in its use in the sentence, still *miles* is nevertheless a name-word. If we frame our definition of the adjective to say that the adjective modifies a name-word, instead of a noun, the adjective *three* is sufficiently explained. Indeed this explanation may be taken to cover *precisely* in the previous sentence, for if we say that the adjective modifies name-words, the adverb everything else, this leaves adverbs to modify clauses of whatever kind; and it is a curious fact that the modifier of a clause or a pharse is always an adverb. But this definition of adjective is not like that which I learned in the grammar books.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Take the first word in *comparatively few came*. In form it is an adverb, in function an adjective. True, the grammarian may try to wriggle out by supplying *people* after *few*; but this is a subterfuge. The supplying of words to force grammatical solutions is, or should be, discredited as merely an evasion. The fact is that no one knows whether *comparatively* in this sentence is an adverb modifying a noun, or an adjective modifying a name-word. At least, I don't.

The other day I wrote this: *they are all equally complete, all equally sentences*. Try this on your grammarian. First give him the sentence with the three last words omitted, and ask him what *equally* is, and what it modifies. If he is in any degree a good grammarian, he will tell you that *equally* is an adverb modifying *complete*. Now spring the second *equally* on him and ask him what it is if not an adverb, what it modifies if not *sentences*. If you proceed in just this way, you have caught your grammarian.

The fact seems to be that there are three distinctions, all of them partial rather than complete, between adverb and adjective. The first, that of form, is the least satisfactory. It says that adjectives with *ly* added are adverbs. This distinction takes us a certain distance, but by no means far enough. It informs us that *slowly*, *thoroughly*, *brightly*, *firmly*, are adverbs; but what of *lowly* and *cleanly*, which are adjectives, or *quick*, which from Anglo-Saxon times has been adverb as well as adjective, condemn *go quick* as you may? This formal test will not take us far. A better distinction is the question test. In my own struggles to decide whether a word or phrase is one modifier or the other, I ask myself what question it answers. If it tells *which* or *what kind of*, it is adjective. If *when*, *why*, *where*, *how*, *in what direction*, et cetera, it is adverbial. This test is good so far as it goes, but unfortunately either modifier may and often does answer *how much* or *how many*. And take the first three words of *knowing the answer, the boy raised his hand*. As a unit those three words constitute a modifier. But does it tell *which* or *what kind of* with *boy*, or *why* with *raised*? Tell me if you can; I don't know.

Possibly the distinction which comes nearest to actually distinguishing adjective from adverb is the one I embodied in the tentative definition I gave a few paragraphs back. If it belongs with a name-word, it is an adjective; if with anything else, an adverb. This distinction will resolve all but a few impossibilities, a few of those utter illogicalities which English is so fond of throwing in the grammarian's teeth.

While we are on the general subject of the modifier, you may be interested to hear that the adjective is responsible for one of the most characteristically vivid developments in modern literary and colloquial slang. Take such phrases, older or recent, slang or conventional, as *fight shy*, *come clean*, *play fair*, *go artistic*, *ca'* (*call*) *canny*, and scores more. In all of them we have an action verb coupled with an adjective. The result is likely to be bold and arresting, and such combinations are multiplying. The adjective is paying its literary way.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A MONTH OF THE THEATRE

THE SHUBERTS AND THE GUILD

by Francis Fergusson

By far the most interesting production I have seen this month was *The Wonder Bar*. This informal revue is from Vienna, I believe, and was presented by Morris Gest in association with the Messrs. Shubert, and adapted by Irving Caesar and Aben Kandel from a show by Geza Herczeg and Karl Farkas. Under such miscellaneous auspices it is surprising to find any unity at all, and almost miraculous (the miracle of discovering a lively folk entertainment) to find it consistently and organically alive in its every detail. Its staging by William Mollison was skilful; but most of all, Al Jolson, the adaptors, and the original authors are to be congratulated on an authentic piece of work.

The authors had an excellent idea: they would combine the night club and the revue; have the actors make their entrances and exits through the audience; and invite the audience to dance on the stage, invitingly set to represent a Continental "bar". All this is duly carried out at the Bayes Theatre. Al Jolson, boss, host and star, greets audience and actors with the same business-like cordiality. The loose story concerns the relations between the night club patrons and entertainers. The cabaret atmosphere is established with precision throughout. The musicians wander in with the audience, and tune up; the waiters appear, then the actor night-club guests. At the end of the act, when the last waiters have put on their coats and left, the host begs a cigarette from the *major-domo*: closing time. As for the story, it is based on the familiar notion that clowns and public entertainers have sad hearts under their smiling faces. The cabaret might seem only a trick (in spite of the fact that cabarets are the most characteristic form of community life in the metropolis) if it were not for the good use the authors and adaptors put it to.

The actor night-club patrons are almost authentic enough to persuade one they are part of the real audience. Elmer Evans, from Duluth, who is sure you remember him and who is bossed by his wife, is a white Protestant American. Mamma and Papa Soloman are kindly Jewish home-folks, socially discriminated against. There is a Russian nobleman, exiled by the Revolution, and there are many other cosmopolitan types imperceptibly graded from patrons to performers. *Grand Hotel* tried to picture such a society, but it lacked the vaudeville virtue of concentrating a thousand familiar perceptions in one phrase, one incident; and that is the service Al Jolson, genial host, performs for us as he greets each guest. The revue, you may say, is always making fun of national types, Irishmen and Jews; but in this show the whole background of the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

character is packed into the host's greeting. When Al meets the Solomans, he saves them from an altercation with the headwaiter, who doesn't want to let them in. Then he sits down with them, and to flatter them tells them a story about his ancestors that his father told him, which agreeably reminds them of the noble antiquity of their race. Then he reminisces about their mutual friends, the Goldbergs and Abramsons back home. He then sings an excellent old Yiddish song from Minsk or Pinsk; and all at once the weight of their background, the comic inevitability of their destiny, is presented to us. He is as much at home with a Russian accent and that national anthem of the exiled Russians, *Black Eyes*, as he is with the Solomans; and the manly handshake he gives Mr. Elmer Evans, groping for his name and smiling the while, establishes that Rotarian where he belongs forever.

At the same time, in its proper relation to the audience, the night-club entertainment continues on the stage: the spectator turns from his familiar image, as he does in real life, to the relief of song and dance. Al Jolson is everywhere: as host he can no more forget to flatter and make merry, than he can forget what his customers are really like. He and the other entertainers are, incidentally, very good revue artists. Four Albertina Rasch girls, dressed in fitted silks the color of their hair and smiling horribly, do a dance in which jazz rhythms are startlingly combined with some of the modernistic German movements like those Mary Wigman invented. Carol Chilton and Maceo Thomas do some light and beautiful tapping. This is my idea of what a revue should be; but it has that other dimension, that firm root in the metropolitan audience, with its contradictory network of inferiority complexes and nostalgias binding it together. The idea is a device which might serve a vision of almost any complexity; but it needs an Al Jolson to realize it. He, by the way, has developed a long way towards unsentimentality; he has stretched his net to include a far wider range of experience than would have seemed possible a few years ago.

Non-conducting Productions

The remarkable thing about *The Wonder Bar* is that, whatever its faults, it was alive in the details. Everything that appeared in that show had a significance, helped to convey its central idea. This is a sure sign that the collaborating artists had the idea: they were conductors: they transmitted it through the living parts of the show to the audience. Remarkable, because, as Henry James said returning from Europe, the source of most of our ideas, the American atmosphere is non-conducting. He meant that just this transmission through the concrete, this real comprehension, was difficult among us. He might have added that when a notion does catch, it sweeps us like a prairie fire.

Now as long as producers have nothing to do with realizing their pieces on the stage, as in *The Wonder Bar*, the fact that they are one-hundred-percent non-conductors, in the Jamesian sense, need not pinch their pocketbooks at all. But when the Shuberts attempt to produce an author like Pirandello, having nothing to go on but the play, they lose a little money, and we, the poor audience, are left in outer darkness.

As You Desire Me

The story, another Pirandellian case of mistaken identity, is that of an Italian woman who was carried away by the Austrian invaders during the war. It was shortly after her wedding that she was captured. She had a loving husband in Italy, and an admiring friend who painted her portrait, and she was established in a kindly and well-to-do environment. When the play opens the painter-friend discovers someone he believes to be this woman living in Berlin with a decadent German writer. He rescues her, takes her back to Italy, and has about

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

persuaded her family she is the lost one, when the German, who wants to get even with her and the painter, turns up with a mad woman who he claims is the missing wife. The family is now in a quandary; they do not know whom to believe, especially since the woman from Germany, whom they would prefer to the mad woman, refuses to give them any help. That is because she sees they hesitate; and this revelation of their lack of faith in her makes her return to her other life, leaving us unsure whether she was the real wife or not.

This play seems to have some excellent scenes: between the woman and the doubting relatives, and between her and the husband whom she tries to give a wife like the one he lost, but who is too stupid and faithless to love the being she is trying to be. In his romantic, exaggerated way, Pirandello makes us believe in these relations, find them again in other, familiar modern tangles. Judith Anderson, who plays the unknown lady, is very good, especially in the earlier scenes of the play. If she is less convincing toward the end it is because her part does not develop, and this was probably the fault of the adaptor and director, Mr. Ostrov and Mr. Varnel. Having a good general grasp of the character and her dilemma, her growth and change would depend on what happened in the play.

I am sorry to record that nothing happened in the Ostrov-Varnel play. The settings, by Mr. Watson Barratt, were so horribly overstuffed, or so wildly modernistic, that it first seemed possible that they were intentional. Pirandello, of course, is a little mad and modernistic himself, and I thought perhaps this quality, with a few screams and pistol shots, was what had caught the Shubert eye. But when the second set had no relation to the first, even of contrast, when the acting was seen to be as wholesale as the sofas, any illusion there may have been of organic consistency died away, and Pirandello with it.

Miracle at Verdun

The famous Guild production belongs in the same class as the Shuberts's Pirandello. With the best intentions in the world, the Guild imported this Continental novelty, and handed it to their last-year's discovery, the present conspicuous director, Mr. Biberman. What was this play like before Mr. Biberman got hold of it? It was certainly not a great play, it was a rather frantic *drame à thèse*. It is almost as certain, however, that it had theatrical possibilities, as both its success abroad and the bold, stagy trick, which is its main idea, would indicate. A group of French and German soldiers, buried at Verdun, are resurrected, and proceed to survey the Peace which they bought with their lives. They approach all the reigning authorities, including politics and the churches, but they find no one to sympathize with their dismay, and they wearily go back to their graves, sure that the living will steer things into another catastrophe as bad as the one in which they lost their lives. The raising of the dead, it seems, might at least have been made exciting; the politicians and churchmen might have been made amusing caricatures, as I infer from the fact that a good actor, like Con Macsunday, was able to make quite a little masterpiece out of his part. But why should the dead do a lock-step round and round the stage? Why should the debates be so infernally loud? The Guild likes to debate; but the Shavian actors do it gently, in cultivated pseudo-English voices. Mr. Biberman seems bent on yelling; and to convince the audience of the "reality" of the whole business, he has real Frenchmen and Germans on the stage, just as he had real live cowboys in *Green Grow the Lilacs*, and genuine Chinese, from Columbia, in *Roar China*. This method did not do for this play. Which goes to show that even an exciting play is no guarantee of success. Too often the poor, striving brain of the producer, pucker itself as it will, fails to move the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

machine the author hands him, and the audience turns away chilled and bewildered.

Getting Married

The Guild's Shaw revival, the last production of their subscription season, refused to be revived. It is touching to see the Guild, after its years of exotic exploration, returning to its old prophet in the hope of finding the old magic there. When the Guild started out from the Washington Square Players some years ago, to reform the theatre and set the world to rights, they found a number of people with the same sensible, humanitarian, and Shavian impulse; and these they organized into a most impressive subscription list. There was something in the mildly exciting atmosphere of the time that enabled the Guild to make a little conflagration out of Shaw's editorial witticisms. They were able to sell his clever lounge lizards to the town at large. There were many who felt they knew more than the rest of the world; and Shaw turned out the shiny half-truths they required. That was the time, too, when the graduates of the women's colleges first began firmly and broadmindedly to take our intellectual life into their own hands. In Shaw—the Shaw who had Faith in Life while prudishly sterilizing human love with snappy terms from Biology; the Shaw who disapproved of Society while capering fitly about in its comfortable Georgian drawing-rooms—they found a temperament closely akin to their own. And when they had their diplomas, what should they do but re-affirm the guiding light of many a hot chafing-dish supper, many a healthful and conversational walk in the stimulating hills near college? One can see now that if the Guild has seemed to wander far from Shaw in the last ten years they have never escaped the fact that it was he who created them. Even their flirtations with Budapest, Vienna and Bolshevik Russia have never affected anything below the eyebrows, never descended to anything so unsensible and un-Shavian as an *affaire de cœur*.

There would of course be more than this to say about *Getting Married*. It is true that the argument is the chief thing; that the characters are sacrificed to their points of view; that even the Shavian scarlet women are good girls at heart, easily amenable to reason, easily acclimatized in those voluble salons. It is true that this play has two endings, one when the plot, which no one takes very seriously, has been resolved and the main characters have departed: and the other, five or ten minutes later, when Shaw has finished his train of thought. Nevertheless there is something real, some hard little wisdom, in this play; and this can only be because Shaw, unlike his disciples, had made some direct observations before he began to think. But this is not the place to attempt a definition of Shaw's merits.

As for the production, I do not see how else one would produce Shaw. In a well-bred and somewhat tea-room interior, well-bred and experienced actors and actresses move easily, speak naturally (when they do not take their English too hard) and, by implication, gracefully invite the audience to share their light bewilderments and their light complacencies. If our pleasure at feeling brightly one with Shaw, Philip Moeller and Margaret Wycherly has become a little remote with the passage of time, that is not the fault of the production nor of the Guild Board of Managers, who have after all nothing to offer us but a resumption of the familiar long-winded debate, decorated with the well-known epigrams, the weapons of their ancient faith.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FICTION

APHRODITE IN AULIS *by George Moore* (BRENTANO. $2.50)

THIS is probably the last work in a long and noted career devoted to the religion of literary beauty. As such *Aphrodite in Aulis* demands careful consideration, the more since probably, if it were by an unknown writer, many critics, not too thoughtful about it, would dismiss it as mannered and monotonous. But as it is the work of George Moore, it is certain to be proclaimed by some a masterpiece of style, and by others damned—if damned at all—with cautious praise.

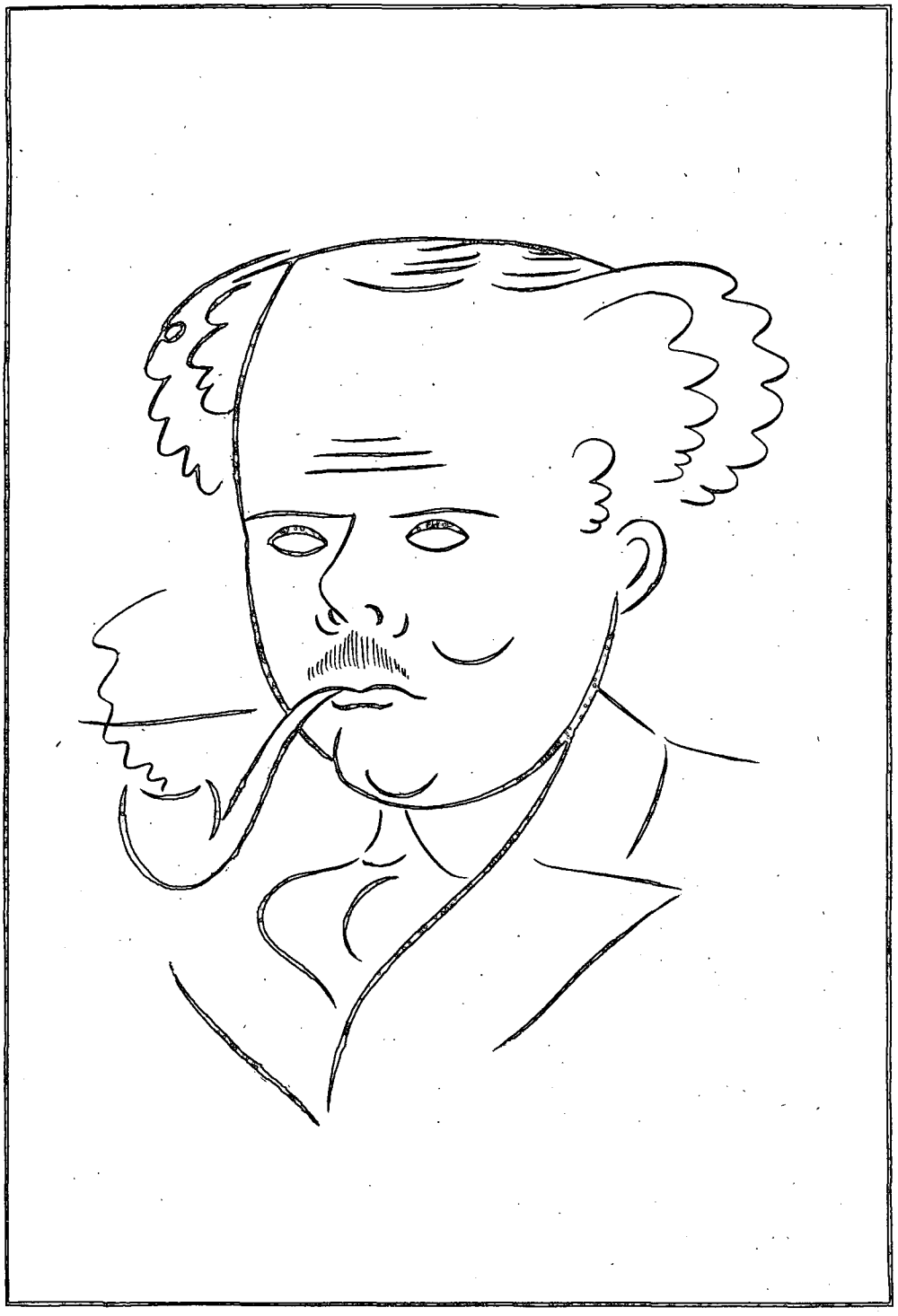
The truth seems to be that one must cultivate a taste for George Moore as well as for olives; and if once the reader becomes sensitized to the evenly flowing rhythm, the coiling and uncoiling of the sentence in sinuous grace, the self-conscious choice of the archaic word, the mixing together of dialogue and narrative, the artful subduing of all high lights of incident or feeling in a soft mist of words, he may feel that *Aphrodite in Aulis* is indeed worthy to be, as the publishers suggest, a "collector's item". It is possible with cultivation to read an entire novel merely for the sake of the expression.

If, however, the reader has the normal interest in a story as story, the normal desire that human emotion be made real to him in fiction, he will be disappointed. This is a tale of ancient Greece of the time of Pheidias and Sophocles. It recounts the chronicles of two generations, beginning with the god-inspired journey of Kebren the rhapsodist into Aulis, telling of his marriage to the daughter of the rich Boeotian merchant, the rearing of his two sons, their development, one into a sculptor, the other into an architect, their marriages and successes, and closing with the completion of their temple to Aphrodite, which was visited and admired by no less a party of sightseers than Pheidias, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes. The central incident of the story gives it its title. Rhesos the sculptor, admonished by an oracle, waits at daybreak the coming of Aphrodite from the sea, who shall give him the inspiration needful for the statue of the goddess. Instead of Aphrodite, however, come swimming from Euboea the two daughters of his grandfather's business partner, who have conceived the quaint design of exhibiting their hinder parts to the first goatherd they may meet, to get his judgment which are the more beautiful. Rhesos, though not a goatherd, is accepted as the Boeotian Paris, chooses, employs the maiden as model, and marries her. Thrasillos, the architect, is content with the sister.

This fairy-tale incident is woven into a narrative the main body of which is the recounting of small day-by-day events. And all events, great or small, beautiful or crude, violent or idyllic, are told in monotone, subdued behind the shimmering Moorish mist of style: characters are surface sketches, accents are avoided, and trends of action which seem to portend much merely emerge from the flowing rivulet of writing to drop back out of sight. The effect is of conventionalized relief rather than sculpture in the round; or better, of pastel work rather than oil painting. Reality and phantasy thus commingle behind a veil without sensible incongruity, and the result is not life but "stylization".

The critic would feel easier if he could place the work in a familiar literary *genre*. He is, for example, reminded strongly of the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



HAROLD NICOLSON

Caricature by Eva Herrmann

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Greek pastoral because of the idyllic setting and material; but the novel is not in any sense a conscious adaptation of the idyll as an art-form. It has no evident double significance of symbolism or allegory. The emphasis on Greek art leads one to look for implications significant to esthetics in general, but except that the Greek artists talk like French impressionists, we get nothing definite. Most conventional of all expectations would be to find another historical novel; but though the author seems to have taken some pains to "get up" his period, he obviously has not taken pains to avoid anachronisms when they suited his design, and he has handled his material throughout in the dreamy mood of Arcadian reverie. And lastly, even this Arcadian mood is not consistently developed, for it is now and again broken into by incidents of realistic crudity.

The conclusion will be for Mr. Moore's admirers that he has achieved an art-form *sui generis*. Others might feel that he has given us neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor good red herring. Certainly his latest book affords another illustration of his familiar qualities. It shows us his "naïve innocence", or childlike visual appreciation of the sensuous, a point of view one chief implication of which is that an adult scale of values in experience is generally ignored. But this ignoring of conventional values is not really childlike; it is the result of a sweeping skepticism, of a training in resolute spectatorship toward life, in which "morality is a myth" and "the artist can only teach by giving the world images of beauty". Characteristically, among the "images of beauty" not infrequently appear those of that delicately improper kind which delight *fin de siècle* esthetes. Like earlier romantics Mr. Moore uses classic Greece as pasturage for an Arcadian imagination, and in an age dominated by a naturalism which he helped to introduce, he reverts to an artfully naïve, a consciously primitive, romanticism.

ALAN REYNOLDS THOMPSON

THE DOGS *by Ivan Nazhivin* (LIPPINCOTT. $2.50)

THIS chronicle of Russian life as it was lived by the various classes before the war, during the war and through the nightmare of the Revolution is told from what is probably the newest point of view to be used in fiction—the canine. Dogs think, Nazhivin maintains; the only real difference between them and human beings is that they do not mistake their thoughts for solid gold. "Equally diffuse, uncertain, changeable and futile are canine and human thought; they are equally made up of quivering mirages which are like a disconnected dream, and break off short, break off in darkness, break off in nothing."

The dogs are of all kinds—sleek prize-winners trained to ascetic perfection, magnificent borzois, mangy nomads of no uncertain history, even a boudoir decadent named Zizi belonging to an ex-mistress of the Czar. There are hierarchies among them, traditions, a secret language—but on the whole they appear more sensible than the representatives of the higher species among whom they roam and sniff, the vicious Grand Duke Nikita, the debauched peasant Peter, or the poor bewildered Princess Sonia. The rule of their commune is simple: *Chacun pour soi, et Dieu pour tous.* Unfortunately, these dogs of Russia must suffer for the excesses of idealism that set their masters at one another's throats. At the beginning Dobrynia, Svietlana and the Prince's other hounds are the pride of their race, snobbish aristocrats to the point of their tails. When we see them for the last time they are mere skeletons, haggard ghosts, without spirit enough left to resist the furious peasants who storm the mansion grounds and hang them, one after another, in their master's presence, upon the birch-trees in the park.

The most memorable portions of the book are those in which Nazhivin recreates the rich sensory grandeur, the teeming repertoire

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the Russian land. His feeling for it is as deep as Turgenev's, and his descriptions comparable only to the best in *The Memoirs of a Sportsman*. It is evident also that his social and political attitude is determined by this same lyrical, almost English, sentiment of nature. One is made to believe that with the prince of his story, model of that benevolent landed gentry which lived at peace with their peasants and their dogs, perished the only solution that existed for the problems of his country.

It is curious that Nazhivin should be more sentimental when he writes about his human characters than when he writes about the habits, thoughts and adventures of his dogs. Toward the end an excessive reliance on coincidence and a tendency to melodrama diminish one's first surprised delight with the nostalgic charm of the style, the chastened irony of the tone, and the altogether novel point of view. Despite its defects *The Dogs* is a *tour de force* of genuine rarity.

WILLIAM TROY

TO THE GALLOWS I MUST GO *by T. S. Matthews* (KNOPF. $2.00)

WHEN the newspapers report a murder, describing the scene and the implements, recording the criminal's remarks and the motives assigned by the police to the crime, the actual murder seems often better than all the murders in books. It may be, on the other hand, that one is moved merely because the news-story suggests in outline the fiction, and that one supplies the bare record with that complexity of motives and emotions and those dire atmospherics which one's reading has built about the idea of a crime. It looks to me as though Mr. Matthews had, in this effort to recreate the Gray-Snyder case, relied too much upon the suggestive power of the news-story and too little upon insight and sense of motive.

He has tried to make murder as plausible as falling down in the street and to show how circumstances can craftily put their heads together to make of the good citizen of Suburbia a criminal. To this end he has created his hero, Todd Lorimer, in the image of a plain salesman, with troubles at home, and a passion for a "dangerous" matron, Florence Haxall, by whom he is lured into helping with the murder of Mr. Haxall (whom he has never seen). Also with a view to plausibility, Mr. Matthews has done his story in a style so artless and literal that, had it been the work of a reporter on any respectable paper, the man would have been discharged.

The story and the hero are both, up to a certain point, comprehensible in their own terms. One follows Lorimer without the least strain through his domestic quarrels, through the growth of his affair with Florence Haxall and, in fact, right up to the point at which she first makes her criminal suggestion. At this crucial moment, however, the story takes a bad turn. One's interest does not entirely elapse, but it drops to vulgar curiosity and suspense. Strangely enough, the book which began like a courtroom confession ends with a literary flourish. Concealed in his hotel room Lorimer hears the police approaching down the corridor, and the author takes advantage of the old "Now I'm on the first stair" device to bring his story to a spooky conclusion.

THE WOODEN WOMAN *by Alexander Townsend* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.00)

A YOUNG woman, believing that her lover has been killed in battle, marries the captain of the *Heaven Belle*, and then finds on board that ship the lover whom she has thought dead. Discovering this situation, the captain strings his bride to the ship's figurehead and tosses the returned soldier overboard in a frightful storm. Both are drowned.

These were the events of the *Heaven Belle's* maiden voyage. Now, forty years later, as the *Heaven Belle* sets sail on her

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

last voyage, the crew finds that it is involved in a strange repetition of the former tragedy. The crew is, in the first place, from the captain right down to the Negro cook, made up entirely of the sons of the former crew. They have all had the story from their fathers, except for one who has dreamed it. There thus seems nothing for them to do but await the ghastly reënactment. Happily, it occurs to the mate to try to force events out of the fateful groove in which they seem to be turning, and, as a result of this man's fortitude, the *Heaven Belle* goes to the bottom but the lovers are cast safely on the shore.

With the foregoing for a plot, with the prose of a Freshman, with some obvious symbolism and just a little crude sex, *The Wooden Woman* must be accounted as among the season's unlamented ephemera.

FREDERICK DUPEE

THE ROAD TO CANAAN *by Pernet Patterson* (MINTON, BALCH. $2.00)

THE eight short stories in this volume comprise, I believe, practically all the literary work of a young engineer who died shortly after giving up his profession to devote himself to writing. The stories all have to do with the Negro as he was in the older South, and the reader of them will be convinced that Pernet Patterson knew the lives and emotions of his characters, their religious awe, their superstition, their humor, their irresponsibility, their occasional opposite endowment of patience, responsibility and courage, as it is given to few white men to do. Had he lived, he might have left us a literary embodiment of the Negro on a broader scale, with greater seriousness and penetration; but as it is, the stories embrace a considerable range of motives, conceived with no little distinctness and skill. Again, had he lived, he would no doubt have made those advances in command of style and narrative method which are the product of experience. *Cunjur* is by far the most remarkable performance in the book; it would be recognized as remarkable wherever it appeared, I think. In it Mr. Patterson showed a degree of power over the dramatic and the *macabre* which makes it his most original and distinguished story. A part of its strength, no doubt, is derived from purely physical revulsion to the practices of the old "cunjur" woman; but it remains a truly exciting and memorable embodiment of the effects of superstition. *Buttin' Blood* is easily the most delightful story in the book, and would be delightful anywhere. Its humor is unforced, and the journey of the little Negro and the white boy to Richmond with the long train of tobacco wagons is an altogether fresh and infectious episode.

Mr. Patterson wrote neither to shock, to astonish, nor to innovate. He was content with the older and pleasanter tradition of fiction, which sought to understand its characters with charity, to present them with lucidity, and which accepted humor (where humor is appropriate) as a part of the obligation of the novelist toward his readers. His ideal was that of the craftsman, and he did not make psychological subtlety or sophistication of method his object. But had he been spared for the work he wished to do, he might have been expected to write able, agreeable, and understanding books, and to grow in power. *Vale.*

THEODORE MORRISON

SYMPATHETIC TO BARE FEET *by Jonathan Leonard* (VIKING. $2.50)

THE novel, like any other form of writing, is subject to minor as well as major changes. And these minor changes, or digressions from regular trends, constitute the interest which Jonathan Leonard's novels have. In *Sympathetic to Bare Feet,* as well as in the previous novels, there is no single dominating quality which lifts it above the general run; there is, rather, a series of differences

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

difficult to define and mark. The most immediately easy to indicate is the casualness of the novel's movement, of the characters' acts. Moving with this casualness the reader proceeds, and suddenly is precipitated down the chute of an episode or a remark that leaves him bewildered, but impressed.

The method, in *Sympathetic to Bare Feet* more than in the other novels, permits Leonard to write of characters whose connection with actuality seems remote, and whose actions always appear to border on the comic. Seriousness—the loss of a finger, the postponement of a marriage—is excluded not in any forced or direct way, but by a kind of comic intensity. "Comic" may appear to be a curious word to use, for none of Leonard's novels provokes outright laughter. The laughter is more the laughter of recognition, of amused understanding. In other words, the effect is that which an occasionally obscure parable might produce in the hearer.

Sympathetic to Bare Feet is, probably, a parable, and when one recognizes the parabolical nature, it becomes an important contribution to the form of the novel, for its method escapes the terminology of satire, social criticism or the comic novel. The method represents a deviation whose intentions hold some possibility for the type of novel we call "socially significant".

KENNETH WHITE

GAY AGONY *by H. A. Manhood* (VIKING. $2.50)

MR. MANHOOD is not the first novelist to become entranced with the picturesque beauty of the background for his story; but it is more than usually unfortunate because he demonstrates so clearly in his manipulation of his characters that he has considerable ability for more important things. It cannot be said, however, that his characters suffer to the benefit of the moors among which they live; simply that their actions and the progress of the story are hindered and put off by sunrises and sunsets and other natural phenomena. Much of this description is meaningless in this recital of an intelligent, perhaps over-refined, man's conflict with himself and others when he is set down among the passions and manners of rude people. Micah Born reached maturity without encountering sexual experience, and *Gay Agony* recounts the consequences of his purity when confronted with the healthy lustiness of Drusilla, the innkeeper, and the loutish vigor of the clod she loves. In Mr. Manhood's hands these characters assume human shape and the relations between them are managed skilfully. Certain portions of the action, particularly the accident to Micah's head, and his violent reactions after his final capitulation to Drusilla, are splendidly written. It is significant that through the characters Mr. Manhood conveys immediately and effectively the warm earthiness which so attracts him in the moorland and which does not come clear through the cloudy wordiness of his descriptions. These latter passages serve merely to distract attention from the well conceived and finely handled characters.

EUGENE ARMFIELD

JUAN IN AMERICA *by Eric Linklater* (CAPE & SMITH. $2.50)

THE fact that this extravaganza of American life was obviously written with a British audience in mind, far from diminishing our enjoyment, gives it an added fillip. For the author, with the gusto of a discoverer, describes in detail so much that we as Americans take for granted that we sometimes almost imagine we are reading about a foreign land. At the least, we see America through very unfamiliar eyes.

Mr. Linklater has turned loose upon our continent a young Englishman illegitimately descended from Byron's Don Juan, who possesses much of his ancestor's love of life. Juan Motley is never squeamish or shocked or

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

timid about what he encounters: he is always glad to meet it half way. He encounters a great deal: after disgracing himself on the football field of an American college, he tries out bootlegging, singing head downward from a trapeze, soda-jerking, love-making on an island owned by a mighty racketeer, cross-country flying and gate-crashing in Hollywood. Mr. Linklater has taken pains not to neglect a single type of job, or class of society, or geographical district in America, and his book is superficially as cross-sectional as it is picaresque. Juan's mad adventures are due to no absurdities within himself, for aside from being resourceful and adaptable, he is a passive type who does not act but is acted upon; rather are they due to conditions of American life. Mr. Linklater, with an eye at once amused and romantic, represents us as a nation of alluring freaks whose ebullient energy is not used up in acquiring culture, making money and achieving fame, but also flows over our daily lives. His picture of us is an almost perfect combination of frontier vices and frontier social naïveté, an almost perfect combination of the tabloids and the "Americana" of *The American Mercury*.

This view of things is, of course, exceedingly naïve in itself; but it is an excellent attitude for writing a successful extravaganza. It is a view which will undoubtedly mislead people into both overestimating and underestimating this book. There will be those who label it a penetrating satire, whereas it is neither satire nor penetrating. Mr. Linklater has simply seized on the most obvious and time worn of American fatuities: our go-getters, our hundred-percenters, our charlatans, our culture-fiends, treating them farcially and without a trace of genuine insight; and he has made our contemporary "bad men"—such as gangsters and bootleggers—the same romantic characters that a previous generation made of cowboys and desperados. To call such a performance satire is to overestimate it ridiculously. But there will also be people who, perceiving that it is not satire, will be so smugly concerned with allocating it critically that they will miss a lot of fun. These people are certain to underestimate the book.

For *Juan in America*, without possessing a single brilliant, original, or profound moment, is successful because it has what more than anything else an extravaganza needs: gusto and high spirits. It bounces along in a carefree, spontaneous, tonic fashion (only growing dull in its final third) never halted in its progress by wit that induces reflection or perspicuity that induces comment. It makes stupid things seem sometimes comic, sometimes romantic and sometimes alive. It produces an America regarded in the distorting mirrors of Luna Park; an America so heightened and colored that, as I have said, it sometimes resembles a foreign land.

I think that Mr. Linklater has done his particular job better than an American could do it because, being a foreigner, he could be completely irresponsible without suffering pangs of conscience. His book, if I may use a word in a transferred sense, is extraverted. He is in perfect adjustment with his material: he neither bends backward in an effort to trace our inanities and idiocies to their unhappy sources, nor writes with cynical asperity to hide a sentimental heart. Having no ax to grind, no reforms to advocate, no loyalties to respect, he could be carefree and high-spirited from start to finish.

LOUIS KRONENBERGER

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BIOGRAPHY

SCHOPENHAUER: PESSIMIST AND PAGAN *by V. J. McGill* (BRENTANO. $4.00)

THIS first full-length biography of Schopenhauer to appear in English since 1890 has none of the faults of the biographical method that has come into vogue since that date. Except for its sub-title (for Schopenhauer's "paganism" is never quite convincing) Mr. McGill's work is entirely free of the various catch-penny devices which attach to the current effort to reduce all the eminent personalities of the past to one or another formula. It is eminently fair, detached and informed.

The formula for Schopenhauer, if Mr. McGill had cared to use it, is the one that has served for Baudelaire in more than one recent study. Like Baudelaire, Schopenhauer had for a mother a sentimental egoist who showed little inclination to accept the responsibilities of her rôle. Johanna Schopenhauer was a bluestocking associated with Goethe's little court at Weimar. She was pretty, ambitious, and toward the close of her life the most popular novelist in Germany. There is little wonder that she preferred to conceal and finally to abandon altogether the morose, heady and wholly unsociable young intellectual who was her son. Her influence on him, however, was deep and permanent. If she did not drive him to perversity, she almost certainly increased his natural bent toward pessimism. And there is little doubt that her character afforded the basis of his melancholy generalizations on the female sex.

In his effort to account for the great popularity of Schopenhauer—"the gray guide of a century"—Mr. McGill offers several theories, among them the superior literary quality of his style as compared with that of other philosophical writers. Whether or not one agrees that it is second only to Plato's, one has to admit that its appeal has been very great among classes of readers not usually given to philosophical speculation. His misogyny and pseudo-epicureanism have infected journalists as different as G. B. Shaw and G. J. Nathan. His sentimental pessimism has darkened the outlook of successive generations of high-school adolescents. There is undoubtedly something in his manner of presentation which endears him to the more susceptible amateurs of thought of all ages.

An analysis of Schopenhauer's style would reveal the number of personal or at least subjective elements of which it is compounded. In such a style ideas are insinuated through the rhythms, the metaphors, and the picturesque colloquialism of tone. The appeal is shunted from the intellect to the sensibility. And since the majority of us tend to function mentally somewhere between the two a warm prose like Schopenhauer's is more effective than the crystalline constructions of an Aquinas or a Spinoza.

WILLIAM TROY

THE MATCHLESS ORINDA *by Philip Webster Souers* (HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS. $3.50)

WITH this volume the *Harvard Studies in English* series is revived after lying dormant for more than a decade; the notable works of Professors Dodd, Mackenzie, and Bernbaum set a pace which Mr. Souers has successfully caught.

Katherine Philips (1631-1664), the Matchless Orinda, lived a life tied up with the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

religious and political fevers of one of England's most fevered periods. She had a positive genius for Platonic friendship, which stands revealed in her frequent occasional poems and in her excellent letters to Sir Charles Cotterell, Master of Ceremonies under Charles II and her own Poliarchus. Her translation of Corneille's *Pompée* takes rank with the best. For Orinda, priority among English poetesses is a more valid claim than superiority, and Mr. Souers is quite wise in his appraisals of her merit. A follower of William Cartwright and a transitional figure from the Cavaliers to the Restoration "mob of gentlemen", a versifier of sincere feeling, with some happy moments, Orinda well illustrates several important trends of seventeenth-century poetry.

Mr. Souers has delved deep into matters historical, geographical, and chronological; it will be hard to quarrel with his scholarship, though he might have given us a bit more on the topic of Orinda's posthumous reputation. He has followed her and her family and pseudonymous friends through freaks of fortune and over three countries; he has traced her actions and thoughts in most illuminating fashion. The result is that this learned lady is made to live once more, a lady who was worth knowing then and still is. Nor does our interest in the Matchless Orinda (truly a magical name) lie merely in the fact that she was a pioneer among English learned and literary women.

Research has not been Mr. Souers's only instrument, for his style is thoroughly pleasing. In this day of jazz biography, when untrained authors attempt to write brightly with a modicum of information, when the goal is the "human touch" in lieu of an accurate picture, a study such as the present is particularly acceptable to those who desire authenticated facts combined with attractive treatment. Has not the legend grown too strong that harps on the divorcement between good writing and good scholarship?

RICHMOND P. BOND

STALIN *by Isaac Don Levine* (COSMOPOLITAN. $3.50)

THE chemistry of political power is still too imperfectly understood for society to dispense with its catalysts, its Big Men, the "bosses" who manipulate events and the statesmen who precipitate them. Even Machiavelli, whose grasp of practical statecraft was unexcelled in theory, in practice required a "Prince", a strong and ruthless ruler who would put principles into action. Yet the history of monarchy reveals, only too clearly, that Princes are mortal and that some force of active continuity is required if the forms of power are not only to survive the man who created them but to create other men to perpetuate the state. Historians can never decide which is the greater, the creative statesman—the Lenin or the Wilson—who forges an instrument of power, or the politician—the Penrose or the Stalin—who knows how to employ the instrument when it is forged.

The essential point to be remembered in Mr. Levine's book is that not Stalin but Trotsky was the heir of Lenin, and that politics in Soviet Russia since Lenin's death have revolved around the issue between these two Communist leaders: the statesman of Bolshevism and the Communist politician. The politician won, by means which reveal an instinct for acquiring power as great, in its way, as the instinct for creating power. Lenin combined both rôles; he was a statesman and a politician. He created a new type of State: that in which the organs of government are dominated by a political creed, a political creed which is the property of a rigidly disciplined and dogmatically unified party, similar in zeal and in exclusiveness to the great monastic orders of the Church Militant.

Where Trotsky concentrated on the creed of practical Communism, Stalin concentrated on control of the Communist Party. With a tenacity of purpose and a personal asceticism,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rare in politicians, Stalin built up a political steam-roller within the Communist Party. He practically broke with Lenin; he did break with Trotsky. He destroyed the power of Rakovsky, Radek, Kamenev, Zinoviev, Rykov and Tomsky. He played one faction against the other, and then destroyed his allies, rendering his enemies helpless by adopting their program in its essence. To destroy Trotsky, he created two legends: Trotskyism and Leninism. The embalmed body of Lenin was the weapon that destroyed the legend of Trotskyism and with it Trotsky himself. Today, at the age of fifty-two, Joseph Stalin, né Djugashvili, whose aliases have included the names of Koba, David, Nizheradze, Ivanovitch, Chizhikov and Vasiliev, is the ruler of Russia.

Mr. Levine's sympathies with Trotsky have sharpened his pen in a manner which is perhaps unfair. Stalin was born in the Caucasus, the Corsica of Russia, the Scotland of the U.S.S.R., with its feuds, its clannishness and its knack of success. He was a "good boy" and an intelligent one. He won a scholarship in the theological seminary from which he was expelled in 1896 for possessing a book by Karl Marx.

Coming in touch with Leninism in 1900, Stalin succumbed to the Bolshevist theory and lived by it. He was arrested again and again, spent years in exile, escaped and was rearrested, and took a leading part in the practical work of Party organization. He left theory to one side. Lenin made him Commissar for Nationality Affairs after the *coup d'état* of November 7, 1917. Since then Stalin has remained at the center of the Bolshevik machine, building his personal power step by step until he became virtual dictator in 1927. In character, he is "a remarkable imitation of Lenin . . . a replica of the type of political boss which the United States has developed since the Civil War . . . primarily a politician and not a statesman". Without personal vices or love of money, he possesses "organizing and executive ability, an unostentatious and plebeian conduct, foresight, unflinching courage of one's convictions, a never-aging spirit of rebellion". "He believes that he is helping create a new order, from which some day all happiness will automatically flow to mankind." He hates smut, drunkenness and dishonesty. He cares not for applause, only for power. He strangles opposition and criticism. His left hand, like that of the Kaiser Wilhelm II, is deformed. He is an "Asiatic", an Easterner in Moscow, who would base the World Revolution upon the masses of China; he is an "American", who would borrow our technique of production to create the Socialist State. Yet "in a cosmic world that does not conform to a single formula, Stalin is lost", and, according to his biographer, the forced pace of trying to "catch up with America" through the Five-Year Plan threatens his régime with revolt.

This biography is vigorously written and presents an amazingly vivid and powerful picture not only of the leaders of Bolshevism as a Party but also of the historical roots of Bolshevism as a Creed. Inasmuch as we have that Party and that Creed with us in the modern world, to a degree which is not quite comfortable, it is well to know who and what it is that faces us at Moscow and drives the Russian State into the untried paths of a planned economy for a social purpose other than war or mere survival.

JOHN CARTER

MÈRE MARIE OF THE URSULINES *by Agnes Repplier* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.50)

THE sub-title of Miss Repplier's book is *A Study in Adventure*, and this perhaps more truly characterizes the work than does the title itself. It is not really a biography of Marie Guyard, the founder of the Ursuline Convent in Quebec, though her biography plays an important part; it is not even the story of the founding and first years of the Convent itself, though this too is told most

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fascinatingly; it is really a short history of New France from the date of the arrival of Mère Marie in Quebec in 1639, to her death in 1673. There is in addition a most charming and delicately ironical account of the fable of Saint Ursula's eleven thousand virgin martyrs, a fable which was the genesis of the Order itself. And yet it was no mere whim of Miss Repplier when she chose Marie Guyard Martin of Tours as the symbol of the spirit of New France. Before entering the Ursuline Order, Marie Guyard had married, been widowed at nineteen and left with a son. She tended him until he was twelve and then, giving him into the charge of a religious school, she took the veil. Her call to civilize the Indians she heard with the extraordinary Mme de la Peltrie, who, like Marie, was a widow and a mystic, but who never became a nun, though she lived and died in Quebec as the good angel of the Convent. The spirit of these two women, who had known the world and who had abandoned it, was truly the spirit which informed the first leaders of New France. The heroic Jesuits, and indeed the first governors themselves, were men of an intensely religious life, and the sufferings of the priests and the martyrdom of many of them were made possible only by the fact that to them this world was really but a gateway to the next. This spirit, which was the spirit of New France, Miss Repplier, a devout Catholic, has made the spirit of her book.

French Canada today does not present, at least in its broader aspects, a picture so pleasant as that portrayed by Miss Repplier of its early days. The reason is not far to seek. Those who in the days of Champlain and Tracy gave it its keynote were neither peasants nor the descendants of peasants, but of the noblest blood of France. Wearied of the corruption at home they came to the New World, not to better their social or financial condition and not to worship God in any new way, but simply to give themselves completely and heroically to the work of their God and their King. Though the *habitant* was then as now a peasant, it was the aristocrat who in the days of Mère Marie gave Quebec its tone. Moreover it was the aristocrat at his best. In her book Miss Repplier writes most exquisitely of the simple yet warmly human life of the infant colony. Against the harsh rigidity of Puritan New England, New France seems a miracle of grace. And even today French Canada knows no such tragic towns as the industrial centers of New England, towns which have engulfed and ruined so many descendants of the Canadian *habitant*. It was the Puritan who triumphed, and it was the industrial system of the middle classes which has put its stamp upon the continent. But what was lost is beautifully shown in *Mère Marie of the Ursulines*.

GRENVILLE VERNON

PEGGY EATON: DEMOCRACY'S MISTRESS *by Queena Pollack* (MINTON, BALCH. $3.50)

THE recent difficulties of the Vice-President's sister furnished the country with breakfast-table amusement though it disrupted Washington dinner tables. But the squabbles of our republican court circle are not always so harmless. When Peggy Eaton was called "Democracy's Mistress" and the "Pompadour of America", she wrecked a cabinet to get recognition. And, meeting her in this sprightly biography, one can well understand the furor she caused. This country in the time of Andrew Jackson was not the place for an unaffected young woman who had a brilliant mind and used it. For that was really the cause of the fracas. The scandal concerning her pre-marital indiscretion was really only a weapon used in a women's war against a woman who insisted on talking politics in spite of "appearances". Certainly as the evidence now stands we are as convinced as was President Jackson that Peggy was actually blameless. She was, in truth, a magnificent

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

personality, a storm center all her life, attracting envy and admiration wherever she went. One could wish, however, that her biographer could distinguish between brilliance and giddiness. Miss Pollack's style is so prone to antithesis and play on words that some paragraphs give one the impression of riding on a see-saw in a hail storm. But on the whole, it is an amusing book about a naïve era and it serves to introduce Peggy to an age that can appreciate her.

PAUL ALLEN

WILLIAM CONGREVE *by D. Crane Taylor* (OXFORD. $4.50)

MR. TAYLOR hopes that his critical biography will be justified by correction of errors found in the only other life—that of Sir Edmund Gosse—and by new information. He finds, for example, no evidence for the common belief that *The Way of the World* failed on first production, or that Congreve quit playwriting in disgust at the failure. He quit in Mr. Taylor's opinion because he preferred society and idleness and had now won the fame and fortune needful for their cultivation. The biography in general reminds us less of English *belles-lettres* than the work of our own efficient literary historians: it has plentiful foot-notes, a bibliography and index, and it is dull reading.

But to be just to the author we should note that his subject is peculiarly unfit for general biographical interest. Congreve had no financial tribulations, no violent vicissitudes, no known romantic passions; his life was rich in friendships and good living but poor in anecdotes. He was the direct opposite of the typical romantic genius in that he did not impose his ego on the world but made friends even of men like Dennis and Pope; he sought society and security, not eccentricity and adventure; he kept his heart not on his sleeve but well buttoned up beneath his waistcoat, and believed that gentlemanly decorum demanded a smiling countenance to the world and reticence about private troubles. (Through thirty-three years he suffered from gout, but to the end charmed visitors by his amiability!) And he took special pains to hide from the world anything that a future biographer could gloat over. In short, he was that extinct species, a gentleman and aristocrat of the classic tradition, and as such the poorest possible subject for a modern biography.

The book is filled out by analyses of the plays and chronicles of the times, and includes a full account of the Collier controversy on the immorality of the stage. "This account", says Mr. Taylor, "will correct a number of previous errors in addition to setting forth some important new facts." (It reminds us again, incidentally, that our own age is the first since the Restoration when it is conceivable for a play like *The Country Wife* to be performed on the public stage. Compared to Wycherley, Congreve is not only witty but decorous. What would Macaulay, who to Mr. Taylor seems to be the chief committer of errors regarding Congreve, say to the morals of our day?)

Throughout Mr. Taylor is markedly partial to his author, and at times lets enthusiasm blur distinctions. "Congreve is by common consent the first comic dramatist in English literature." One wishes that he had been content to claim for Congreve what by common consent he really deserves—preeminence in comic dialogue alone.

ALAN REYNOLDS THOMPSON

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A VARIED SHELF

AMERICAN CARAVAN IV *edited by Alfred Kreymborg, Lewis Mumford, Paul Rosenfeld* (MACAULAY. $5.00)

WHEN the editors of the *American Caravan* say that they have at last "more nearly reached the ideal they have set themselves" because the fourth volume is "an almost complete representation of every phase of American literature", they raise an irrelevant question. The value of such a yearbook should not be measured in terms of completeness of representation, and if it is, the editors have small reason for complacency. In this book there is plenty of reading matter: short novels, a scenario, a play, short stories, poems, essays, and a form merely called prose, but the full-length novel is perforce missing and it is begging the question to say that the play, for instance, is representative. The *Caravan* may, however, show which way the wind is blowing, and if it points toward the future of American literature, as it ought, for the average age of its contributors is slightly over thirty, it more than justifies its existence.

That the present volume boasts fewer distinguished names than the *Caravan* of two years ago is further evidence that here is an indication of the literature of the next ten or fifteen years. No longer dependent on names like Robert Frost, Conrad Aiken, Sherwood Anderson, these younger writers seem to say that they are willing to stand or fall by their own efforts, and it is therefore reasonable to ask wherein lies the peculiar strength which makes them independent of their elders and betters. We are so used to revolutions in literature in which a group or a whole generation turns its back upon the past and maps out for itself a new future that a critic is conveniently prepared with ready-made expectations of revolt. Unable himself to create a new literature, he may know on what principles and toward what end the attempt should be made, and although he may sympathize heartily with revolution, if he passes any unfavorable judgment on what is known as new writing, he is immediately suspected of not making the necessary effort to understand the author's intention. Very rarely here, however, is an extraordinary effort demanded. Whatever revolt may be in this volume was fathered by an earlier generation. It would be a wild mistake to suppose that many of these two score writers are weary of the normal use of language and are trying to invent for themselves new symbols of self-expression or that they are "difficult" because of the unusual vigor of their invention and imagination. Though a good many of them write with all the air and manner of novelty, they actually have nothing new to say or feel, and such writers, followers of bolder men, do not at their present state of development point toward the future at all, but toward the past.

One looks in vain for vitality, freshness, humor, satire, any of the things which one supposes belong to a lively and coming literature. Most apparent in the whole volume is repetition of old themes, and nowhere is this more unnecessary than when it adds to the already enormous number of case histories of neurotic personalities. Ordinary literary standards must be waived in judging such work, for although the "study" may be dull, ridiculous, lacking in point, the author can reply, like the preacher, "Life is like that". The high point in one story of this sort is reached when a very offensive child

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

spits on the scrambled eggs which a starving man is eating. In another are exposed the thoughts and feelings of a man who attempts suicide by turning on the gas because he is obsessed in true German romantic style of a hundred years ago with the beauty and greatness of his own soul. Nor are some of the writers above depending upon tricks to create their effects. A sermon on the failings of the Yankee becomes a poem when punctuated by : : to mark the caesura. The literary ancestry behind some of the contributions is even painfully apparent. A short novel, probably allegorical, is so pretty in the old-fashioned way that when it is time to introduce a poet, he is named Florio. Phelps Putnam, already well known for his swaggering agony, is badly represented by some verses showing study of some of the less recondite symbolism of James B. Cabell. The scenario, hailed as a "new and powerful fictional method", tells the story of John Wade and his worship of the Electrical God, and how when the love of a pure woman enters his life the Dynamo gets its revenge. Instead of a new language to express new situations and new emotions, the old language, even that of the more elegant advertisers, is perfectly adequate. Two writers are even content with the cliché *gesture*: "the aesthetically complete gesture", "the white gesture of Humility—".

There is honest work in the volume, notably the story and poem by Robert Penn Warren, the stories by Robert Cantwell, Doris Peele, S. Guy Endore. John Gould Fletcher's essay, said to open up "an important controversary" [sic] with T. S. Eliot, ends so abruptly that the argument is not clear. But as there is, on the whole, so little new in the book, the question arises why these particular contributions should be preserved for posterity in the permanent form of a relatively expensive volume, why they are more worthy of such preservation than the usual run of material in good magazines. The myth is, of course, that the best writing of the best writers is never accepted by the obtuse and commercially-minded magazine editor and that it can only be published in magazines of limited circulation, preferably printed in Paris on flimsy paper. Very little of the matter in this *American Caravan* is so new, so bold, or so excellent that it would have to be printed in such a medium, and much of it is so distinctly second-rate that it would be unpublished today were it not for the superstition that really good work does not find in this country an audience by the normal means of publication. And if the *American Caravan* makes no pretensions for itself, if it makes no boast of encouraging promising young authors and places itself frankly on the same footing as any other publication, there is left only one general criticism: that among six-hundred-page books it is one of the dullest.

THEODORE BAIRD

A SCOTTISH MAN OF FEELING: SOME ACCOUNT OF HENRY MACKENZIE, ESQ., OF EDINBURGH AND OF THE GOLDEN AGE OF BURNS AND SCOTT *by Harold William Thompson.* (OXFORD. $5.00)

If that long title reminds readers of eighteenth-century title pages so will the mind of the author remind them of some of the most virile and human authors of that century. Masses of exact and various learning exert no petrifying pressure on one whose sense of humor so holds them off, while his enthusiastic imagination, his imaginative enthusiasm, shoots through and through them to disclose their significances and melt and sluice them into shapes.

With clear, decisive judgment Mr. Thompson scrutinizes and presents the intellectual activities of "the Athens of the North" during the period when much of the most lively philosophy, history, criticism, drama, fiction and poetry were being gestated and brought forth in Scotland. And it is with no distortion that he focuses his scrutiny and that of his

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

readers on Henry Mackenzie. For that "man of feeling" was influenced by Hutchinson, who "adapted the ideas of Shaftesbury in a way agreeable to the Scottish genius", by David Hume, to whom he was "a sort of literary page", by Adam Smith and other Scottish thinkers of the century: the way was prepared for him by the Scottish poets, Allan Ramsay, James Thomson and Robert Blair; and before he "died in 1831 he had named for his country's glory Burns, and Campbell and Byron, Constable and Blackwood, Jeffrey and Lockhart, Galt and Scott". He had been "A Friend of Garrick", and author of one of "the four triumphs" of the Scottish drama in the Golden Age, and he had been "The Scottish Addison", member of influential literary clubs and most important writer for two periodicals, *The Mirror* and *The Lounger*, which were the organs of one group of literary legal gentlemen. He had contributed later to *The Edinburgh Review* and to *Blackwood's* in their beginnings. Most important of all the qualifications of Mackenzie for a focal position in a presentation of the Golden Age in Scotland, he was for Scotland what Sterne was for England, what Rousseau was for France, and what the young Goethe was for Germany, a sort of nuclear concretion, because of *The Man of Feeling* and its sequels and his plays, of the essence of sentimentalism.

Mr. Thompson's four hundred and sixteen pages, exclusive of appendices containing a chronology of the Golden Age, and three extensive and conveniently arranged bibliographies, of indexes, general and "of persons", and of the charming, confidence-winning "Preface, Intended for Reading", constitute a full and fair and fascinating consideration of the Sentimental Movement from Shaftesbury and Hutcheson to the close of Mackenzie's life when he was being visited by such Irish and American sentimentalists as Tom Moore and Washington Irving. And the last chapter shows the tradition going on valiantly in our own day, and in America as well as Scotland, abetted by the perennial works of Robert Louis Stevenson and Sir James Barrie.

The consideration is fascinating because Mr. Thompson is so enthusiastically interested in the temper and the intemperance of the Scotch, in their taste for things speculative and stimulating, in their politics and their anecdotes, in their hearty, crusted customs, their prejudices and practical sagacity, and their philosophical wisdom.

And it is fair because he has the good sense not to conceal his own prejudice as a conservative, and as a man of Scottish descent, and because he has thought very clearly and honestly about sentiment and sentimentalism. He mocks with "pawky" and delightful humor at the tears and languishings, the tenderness and the natural goodness, the souls too pure and noble for decent behavior with flesh and blood associates, and at all the self-deception and evasiveness of sentimentalism in Mackenzie's time and our own. He is tough-minded enough, however, to see and say that the sentimentalists, though like Mackenzie they may have outgrown and admirably criticized their extravagances, had and still have an important reality in mind; that

> The heart aye's the part aye
> That makes us right or wrang.

SIDNEY COX

MY EXPERIENCES IN THE WORLD WAR *by John J. Pershing* (STOKES. TWO VOLS. $10.00)

AMERICA's best-known soldier gracefully and generously dedicates his remarkable book "To the Unknown Soldier". Conceived as a public duty, written in a vigorous, characteristic style, General Pershing frankly gives to the public the best memoirs yet produced by any of the leaders in the World War or by any of our commanders in previous wars.

Fearlessly, and with fairness, he gives his experiences, makes his observations and com-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ments. Our actual failure to realize the impending danger and to prepare adequately for our participation is emphasized by a careful marshalling of facts and shortcomings. "It is not extravagant to assert", writes General Pershing, "that the addition of 500,000 American combat troops in early spring (1917) would have given the Allies such a preponderance of force that the war could have been brought to a victorious conclusion before the end of that year. . . . Thus through a false notion of neutrality . . . a favorable opportunity to assist the Allies was lost, the war was prolonged another year and the cost in human life tremendously increased. But, from another viewpoint, it is not improbable that if we had been thus prepared, our rights would have been respected and we would not have been forced into the war." General Pershing describes conditions, events, men, and things as he saw them—the chips fall where they will. It is the first book that gives America full credit for turning the tide. There may never be another, except from the pen of some junior American commander.

Secretary of War Baker's letter of instructions to General Pershing, like that of former Secretary Root to General Chaffee for the China Relief Expedition, required the maintenance of the integrity of our forces, and this was carried out, in the face of every obstacle. Great leaders must, of necessity, be endowed with that fearless self-assurance that caused Pershing to write, "there was no doubt in my mind then, or at any other time, of my ability to do my part, provided the Government would furnish men, equipment, and supplies". Fortunately, he had another great asset in the unqualified support of the administration, something which has been denied our commanders, at times, in the past. "I am grateful to President Wilson and Secretary Baker", says General Pershing, "for having selected me to command our armies and for the whole-hearted and unfailing support they accorded me."

The material is far better handled in the book than it was in the syndicated serial. The publisher could have added to the mechanics of the book by having the excellent maps properly placed in the text and facing the right-hand pages.

Brief diary notes, conversations, and many documents, in whole or in part, add historical value to the work. Important statements of fact, dates, and statistics have been verified by a comparison with the official records of the War Department. The book should bear a statement to this effect, in justice to the author and to the care he has exercised in its preparation. Notwithstanding the fact that there is no system of annotation, the book will have an authoritative position on the World War shelf. It is a great book for the civilian and the soldier alike.

ROBERT C. COTTON

THE NEMESIS OF AMERICAN BUSINESS *by Stuart Chase* (MACMILLAN. $2.00)

MR. CHASE'S book consists entirely of articles previously published in weekly or monthly magazines, the only change, apparently, being the substitution of three new titles for as many old ones. Re-read in this collected form, the essays show very well both the excellencies and limitations of Mr. Chase's method of dealing with current economic and social matters. He is at his best in exposing, vividly and in popular language, the weak points of the existing order and its devastating consequences for those most disadvantaged by it. The depressing effect of massed machines, the monstrous turmoil of the great city, and the hard lot of the unemployed stand out in his pages side by side with alluring pictures of the comforts and pleasures that we might have if the part of the world in which we live were different. Incidentally, Mr. Chase contrives to tell us a good deal about himself, and a considerable section of his biography might be pieced together out of the thickly sprinkled allusions

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to the places he has been in, the kinds of work he has done, the recreations he has affected, and the things he likes or detests or would be glad to see.

The limitations appear when Mr. Chase turns counsellor. The substance of his criticism and suggestion appears to be that we suffer as we do primarily because our economic life is not planned, and that we ought to put our heads together and substitute plan for disorder. In his chapter entitled *The End of an Epoch* he outlines a course which, he modestly thinks, would make an end of recurring "shattered epochs". There should be an international conference to bring about "economic disarmament"; "a bold program for the revision of the credit structure" in accordance with the ideas of the Stable Money Association, enforced by Congressional legislation; a National Planning Board to draw up a ten-year plan for the "coördinated economic development" of the United States; amendment of the Sherman anti-trust act so as to permit "the regularization of production and the allocation of markets", but with reservations which, among other things, would ensure the protection of consumers against monopoly; the replacement of "the declining motor-car industry" with a vast scheme of slum-razing and home-building; abolition of stock-market "gambling", and resistance to wage reductions together with an active effort to shorten working hours.

No one, surely, objects to having a Utopia held out to him once in a while, but the reader who is not carried away by Mr. Chase's lively style and abounding array of incidents may well wonder why so little is said about how any of these things may possibly be achieved. It is well enough to arraign the present economic system as disorderly, but precisely what other system is it that should be planned? Mr. Chase would perform an extremely useful service if, having shown to his own apparent satisfaction the mess that has been made, he would demonstrate, in terms of hardheaded practicality, exactly what, for example, he means by "economic disarmament" and what an international conference could do about it, or what a "coördinated economic development" consists in and by what means the scheme could be set up, or how we are to avoid monopoly prices if the field is to be widened for the trusts, or why wages should be kept up when commodity prices fall and business declines. After all is said and done, there still remain to be considered such practical things as ways and means, laws, constitutions, politics and class interests. Regarding such matters Mr. Chase's book has nothing of importance to say.

WILLIAM MACDONALD

A SECOND ELIZABETHAN JOURNAL

by G. B. Harrison (R. R. SMITH. $6.00)

BELIEVING that history, as it is usually written, mirrors very imperfectly the preoccupations of a people, Mr. G. B. Harrison feels that if we could know what people were really interested in, and what they talked about from day to day, we should come much closer to understanding them.

In his *Elizabethan Journal*, Mr. Harrison attempted to reconstruct the background of a national life. From memoirs, letters, and public archives of the Elizabethan era, he obtained a chronological record of the events of the years 1591-1594. This material, the product of patient research, he handled very freely, condensing or paraphrasing it to meet his own requirements. His tests of its suitability for inclusion in the journal were concerned with two points: first, was it good gossip? Would it have been interesting enough to achieve wide currency? Second, was it generally known at the time? How far was it discussed, and from what angle?

This volume, *A Second Elizabethan Journal*, continues the gossipy narrative through the years 1595-1598. These were crowded years, just at the beginning of the great period of Elizabethan literature, when

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Shakespeare was making his reputation as a playwright. There were riots in London, wars in Spain and Ireland, exploration and conquest in the New World. There were intrigues and conspiracies, masques and revels at court. The Elizabethan burgher was frightened and excited now and then by a crime wave. The record is filled with a constant recital of lawlessness—from coney-catching and cozenage, to highway robbery and high treason. The hypothetical diarist of this *Elizabethan Journal* sets down with equal enthusiasm an account of the return of Drake's fleet, or a comment upon the high words that passed between the Queen and the Earl of Essex. He notes how "Mr. Chapman translateth Homer's Iliades", or how young Thomas Darling is possessed with evil spirits through the spells of a witch, Alse Gooderidge. Or he may remark simply that "today there is a great fall of snow and the Thames again frozen over".

Mr. Harrison concludes from his adventures into Elizabethan gossip, that the national character of the English has not changed very greatly since the sixteenth century. The times, indeed, may have been somewhat more cruel, more disorderly, more superstitious. But the average Englishman, then as now, was a fairly good fellow, with the same lack of fanatical idealism or rigid principle, and the same robust common sense displayed by his modern counterpart.

MARGARET WALLACE

GOETHE AND BEETHOVEN *by Romain Rolland* (HARPERS. $5.00)

IN THE *Prelude* to the latest fruit of his "Beethoven exploration", M. Romain Rolland makes some statements that are of the highest significance for an unclouded understanding of the book. The first is that Goethe has been the teacher and comrade of every day of his life—Goethe who "poured out a stream of lively and novel experiences, nature's spring". The second is that Music is the heroine of his story. Therefore: "The main object of my book is to remind my hearers that the greatest poet of modern Europe belongs also to the fellowship of musicians".

It is very important that these statements should be borne in mind. For much popular criticism, with its craze for personalities, seizes on Bettina von Arnim as the heroine, and with its preference for naturalism, on Beethoven as the hero, in the story of their relations with Goethe, who is automatically labelled "Olympian", "egotistical", "formal", "worldly", and the like. For Goethe is far less easily understood than an apparently simple, elemental nature like Beethoven's. The latter seems, unless he is closely studied and grasped with the whole mind, not so much "Beethoven the Creator" as a kind of mouthpiece for the universe. His music seems not at first the expression of an individual personality; in it the whole Creation groaneth and travaileth together. He takes a little theme from a charming but trifling ballet composed by Mozart at the age of twelve—for like Shakespeare, Dante, Homer, and all great creators he possessed the divine gift of plagiarism—gives it a downward twist at the end into the minor mode, and through it sweep spirits of Air and of Earth; it becomes the grandest of symphonies. The path to the understanding of Beethoven is plain; once we open our ears we are led on almost insensibly. It is not necessary to know the goal of the journey until we reach it, nor, indeed, to reach it at all.

With Goethe it is not so. "Goethe's life", writes M. Rolland, "was like an arrow shot from a bow, which, once loosed, cannot be stayed in its flight to the ever receding target. The problem of that life is so vast even now, a hundred years after his death, and remains so fresh and vital, that truth, as I think, invites me to retain the freedom of presentment which I have displayed in these present studies."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Even now, a hundred years after his death, there are not many who are at once so free from superficiality and partiality as M. Rolland is here. He realizes that it was as necessary that Goethe should behave under certain circumstances like a man of the world as it was natural that Beethoven should behave with extreme independence. With M. Rolland to understand all is not to pardon all, but to have no need of pardoning. Nor does he exaggerate the breach between Goethe and Beethoven. He performs a real service by bringing home the fact that even though they never met again after Teplitz, there was no real estrangement. Beethoven continued to revere Goethe and did not hesitate to appeal to him on his nephew's behalf. Goethe in turn often had Beethoven's music played in his house at Weimar and had no hesitation in recommending to Beethoven a young musician who was going to Vienna. The whole essay on *Goethe the Musician* is possibly the most valuable and interesting section of the book.

That on Bettina does not inspire the same confidence. One feels that here M. Rolland's gift for identifying himself with his subject may have led him to be too emotional. It is true that the papers to which he refers have somewhat modified the traditional view of Bettina. She was certainly a superior woman; and even, perhaps, a *grande amoureuse*, though M. Rolland is not very convincing when he writes about the "nobility" of her love for Goethe. But the fact remains that she published as authentic letters which had never been written, true though they may have been in substance. This is not a light offence, particularly when the party of the second part is a man about whom every recorded fact is of unusual significance in attempting to arrive at a true understanding of his life. Moreover, one cannot go all the way with M. Rolland when he insists that *Dichtung und Wahrheit* could never have been written without her aid. But it is hard to resist the eloquence, preserved in this excellent translation, with which he portrays Bettina's inner history.

For he can be very eloquent. After Proust *Jean-Christophe* does not seem everything it once did, but few can write about music as well as M. Rolland did in that novel. It is scarcely less difficult to write about a musician, whose greatness is adequately displayed only in his music, and make him seem a great man. Of the three short lives of "tortured souls" which M. Rolland has written, that of Beethoven is probably the least successful—Tolstoy and Michel Angelo touched life on many sides and both survived into a new age, but Beethoven's life was his music. In the present work the author has succeeded better in making us feel that Beethoven was a great man as well as a great musician. How striking is this remark to Bettina: "Most people are moved by something beautiful, but they are not artistically minded; artists burst into flames, not tears".

Of the two *Appendices*, that on *The Marseillaise in Germany* is not strictly relevant, but very interesting. *Bettina's Letter on Music* is very pertinent, but, apart from its context, not illuminating, in spite of M. Rolland who finds it rather awe-inspiring.

But it is not the new and more sympathetic view of Bettina, nor the keener appreciation of Beethoven's force of mind and character that makes this book so interesting. It is the fresh realization of the complexity of Goethe and the new light into which M. Rolland leads him, rather than merely casts upon him. The pleasure derived from M. Rolland's book, is to a lesser degree, of the same kind as the shock of wonder with which after a long preoccupation with *Faust* one discovers the Goethe of *Wilhelm Meister*, or after lingering over Eckermann refreshes oneself at the springs of the youthful lyrics. To revivify one's image of Goethe is no ordinary achievement. That, on a small scale, and for one small part of that great life, is what M. Rolland has done.

JAMES ORRICK

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AMERICAN HUMOR *by Constance Rourke* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $3.50)

To THOSE who read topic-sentences, may I make myself clear before indulging in paragraphs: this is one of the two or three most original, illuminating and entertaining books I have ever read about America. Miss Rourke has opened up and brilliantly surveyed a whole new field for surmise and argument—a field so teeming with rich material and deep unsuspected relationships that her book may well point the way to some eventual understanding of the American popular heritage. American humor—*the* American humor—dry, twisted, self-conscious, exuberant, fantastic, and endless flow of oracular monologue from Jack Downing to Will Rogers, from the earliest Yankee to T. S. Eliot, from Davy Crockett to *Moby Dick*, from *The American* to *Dodsworth*—it is only extraordinary that no one has adequately tapped this rich vein before.

To a member of the generation that started denying America before it went to college, that held its breath and closed its eyes for fear of contamination until it got to Paris, or London, or Berlin, or Moscow—that was ardently *surréaliste, sachlich*, or *Internationale* before it ever opened an American book voluntarily, for pleasure or profit—this book comes as something of a shock. For it becomes apparent almost immediately (so concisely, so constructively does the author arrange her material and her comments) that the latest Left-Bank expatriate is no less American than the fabulous Mike Fink who passed into legend in the fifties, crying bitterly, "What's the use of improvements? Where's the fun, the frolicking, the fighting?"

The title and sub-title might almost be reversed. For "a study in national character" is, and must be, a true appreciation of the American comic spirit. "The comic", Miss Rourke quotes from Bergson, "comes into being just when society and the individual . . . begin to regard themselves as works of art." But the comic spirit in America may be more closely defined. American culture was, from the beginning, the result of a specific conflict. The place was new—but the people were old. Environment was primeval and function primitive, offering endless chance and mischance in the mere business of keeping alive. The scale of actuality was exceeded only by the scale of possibility. This all-too-strenuous present cried for release and romantic justification in legend-making, in poetry. But the folk were the product of an old civilization. They were too wise to be primitive, too self-conscious to be altogether natural. And, away from their old grooves, their self-consciousness grew to large proportions. The European Eye (existing vestigially as a sort of second sight in every American) twisted the poetical force into the wryest of comedy, into exuberant burlesque of almost epic proportions. The wise crack and the hard-boiled pose are notoriously the marks of thin-skinnedness—and are as old as the first Yankee peddler, swapping his way up and down the coast.

"The new country", writes Miss Rourke, "made a strangely painted back-drop before which the American seemed constrained to perform." And the performers—the three related type-figures who emerged—have had their recognizable effect on every phase of American character. The first was the Yankee, shrewd, wary, flat-voiced, sardonic. The backwoodsman followed, retailing his rhapsodic fables with grotesque winking exaggeration. Then the minstrel and pure nonsense, with a new undertone of defeat caught perhaps from the Negro. From these three basic figures the progression to Mr. Dooley, to Mrs. Feitlebaum, to Ring Lardner's dubious heroes, involves merely change of costume and idiom, never of animating comic spirit.

In the clear light of her researches in the popular mood, Miss Rourke reconsiders the brighter literary stars and, from Mark Twain

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to Sinclair Lewis, from Emily Dickinson to T. S. Eliot, her brief analysis is satisfying and her casual comments are fresh and relevant.

"Humor has been a fashioning instrument in America", she writes; but (and she must be allowed her concluding reservation)—"The comic upset has often relaxed rigidities which might have been more significant if taut: individualism has sometimes seemed to wear away under a prolonged common laughter. The solvent of humor has often become a jaded formula, the comic rebound automatic—'laff that off'—so that only the uneasy habit of laughter appears, with an acute sensitivity and insecurity beneath it as though too much had been laughed away. . . ." This is above all a sane and human document. It is a heartening counterbalance to the current habit of isolating all manifestations of Art and ascribing mathematical evaluations of significance thereto; an antidote to those critics who persist in regarding an Independents' Show as an affront to their education.

CATHERINE K. BAUER

THIS NEW YORK OF MINE *by Charles Hanson Towne* (COSMOPOLITAN. $3.00)

THIS chronicle of New York from the eighties down to the present pressing moment is not "just another book" about Manhattan. It raises itself to a nice altitude among the literature of the great city, for the poet that is Mr. Towne breaks through this lively social history at frequent intervals and strikes a clear, rare note. The book has style, though it does not present a distinctive point of view. We are neither shocked nor lured into new enthusiasm or sympathy for Gotham or the Gothamites. It leaves the essential temper of the giant place pretty much as it was before. Delightful observation is, however, the next best thing to authentic philosophy, and Mr. Towne's volume reflects a warm, tolerant, and often amused spirit awake to every facet of metropolitan life.

Twenty-three years ago Mr. Towne, then a very young man (born in Kentucky but brought up and educated in New York), wrote a long poem, *Manhattan*, which made him famous overnight. Since then the keys of the city have been his. Artistic and literary circles have borrowed his companionship and begged his criticism (which is never harsh), no social event can quite come off without his presence, and his professional career as editor and author-about-town has developed into that type of genial progress which inevitably leads to a narrative of this personal and reminiscent nature. All through the years Mr. Towne has been saving his impressions, his facts, his mental portraits and, as you will observe, his *cartes-de-visite*. Great names ride his pages, gleaned from the days when the author was secretary to John Brisben Walker, then owner and publisher of the *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, to the present time, when he views his "city that blooms like a terrible flower" from an important editorial desk and from a Column in a metropolitan newspaper.

There is no denying that Mr. Towne loves celebrities. He fondles them—he rolls their names under his tongue; but, happily, in his book there remain equal room and appreciation for the tragedy and beauty of those less luminous members of society who do so much to make New York the place he describes as "A city of energy and hope and despair. A city of terror, too; and yet, for almost every one of us a city that we cannot leave". Demetra Vaka Brown, author of *Haremlik* and other studies of Turkish life, once said of Charles Hanson Towne that he was "a true literary boy", which still remains an apt description and gives the clue to the charm that lies in his writing. The first chapters of his new book are by far the most engaging. Charley Towne, the child, in a New York where the lamplighters went about with little ladders on their shoulders to light the street lamps, and kind omnibus officials scattered straw on the bus floors to

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

keep the feet of the citizens warm, and old gentlemen came to dinner and recited Poe, lived a magic sort of life in a friendly, intimate city. Something *gemütlich,* such as pervades the early pages of *Peter Ibbetson,* is encountered here. Later on, the more sophisticated contacts and snapshots and the roar of the "lions", as presented against the ever-changing steel and granite background, could without half trying get under the skin of a radical reader or two. Discounting this, however, the scenes and characters move swiftly, colorfully and pleasantly.

This New York of Mine is an "invitation to the ball" for all who would participate vicariously in a glittering kaleidoscope. For the more demanding reader there are not only the Kohinoors but some hidden jewels as well. It is the vogue to call Mr. Towne names—"The Peter Pan of the Coffee House", "another O. Henry", "the Playboy of the Magazine World", and so on, but we prefer to regard him as very much himself; so much himself, in fact, that a future historian-essayist of New York may feel well honored some score of years hence to be dubbed "the new Charley Towne".

LYNN ANDERSON

INNOCENCE ABROAD *by Emily Clark* (KNOPF. $3.00)

This book bears resemblance somewhat in the occasion for its existence to Margaret Anderson's *My Thirty Years' War,* for although Miss Clark's volume is not an autobiography, it centers around *The Reviewer,* just as Miss Anderson's did around *The Little Review.*

Beyond this there is no similarity. *The Reviewer* survived a brief glory of about three years, from 1921 to 1924, and died after transplanting to North Carolina. It was one of the few magazines devoted to *belles-lettres* that Virginia has produced, and therein lies a partial explanation of its manifest acceptance among literary folk.

When Miss Clark and Hunter Stagg, both of Richmond, planned the little magazine, they had nothing to go on but their enthusiasm. Mr. Stagg was a book reviewer of something more than Virginia renown and Miss Clark combined with her experience in similar work sufficient spirited interest and, as she confesses, innocence of magazine editing to produce something new in the contemporary literary field.

Two interesting things stand out in the life of *The Reviewer*; first, the fact that it could without payment attract to its pages the work of such writers as James Branch Cabell, Joseph Hergesheimer, Ernest Boyd, H. L. Mencken, and others; and second, that it actually did publish the first work of such people as Julia Peterkin, Paul Green, Frances Newman, and Gerald Johnson.

Miss Clark has devoted only one chapter of her book to the facts immediately connected with *The Reviewer.* The greater part of the volume deals with those writers with whom the editor had most interesting contacts through the magazine and about whom she knew most. How much of *The Reviewer's* glory was due to the excellence of its standards and how much to the tips and contacts of such established writers as Mencken and Cabell is not clear in this book. The little magazine was thoroughly literary. It made no concessions to things commercial and it died. The enthusiastic reception it got from Northern editors and the reserved praise which a few Southern newspapers extended are not hard to explain. For the South to produce anything literary in 1921 was a novelty. Miss Clark and her staff were missionaries of beautiful letters, and even the surliest of writers has a soft spot in his heart for the purely literary magazine. In general, the book is an interesting study of a period and of personages that mean much to American letters. And one puts it down with an honest regret that *The Reviewer* is gone.

ALAN BURTON CLARKE

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ESSAYS AND CRITICISM

MEN OF ART *by Thomas Craven* (SIMON & SCHUSTER. $3.00)

IN *Men of Art* Thomas Craven has revived the critical style of the nineteenth century, ousted pure art, that idealistic fiction of the modernist estheticians, replaced subject matter, and necessarily put back, along with this replacement, the old conception of right and wrong in painting. With the arrival of the School of Paris the majority of the old doctrines were discarded. A new set of rules was needed to express the more or less new realm into which art had stepped; to express or to justify. Analysis cannot come before the fact. The School, busy with experimentation, out on a truly technical debauch, could not be bothered with life or was too much bothered by it. Order of one kind or another must be restored to painting and art purified. Cézanne was greatly responsible here; so were, negatively, the Impressionists. The latter had done nothing more than to take snapshots of pieces of nature and to record scientific truths on air and light. Cézanne, himself an Impressionist, found that even in the reproduction of a piece of nature (he painted directly from her) there must be some record made of cosmic order, some method found by which the visual chaos could be brought into a permanent harmony. The artist must create or re-create.

After Cézanne, where people had talked of composition they now talked of organization. The change held dangers. Cézanne had sought his organizations in nature. "He is the solitary glory of Post-Impressionism or Modernism." His followers gradually disregarded nature altogether; went to sea, this might mean, in cockle shells. Abstract art was born or revived. Still life painting, so long given a secondary place, was raised to the level of other painting. One department of art could not count more than another. Important painting, which is sometimes called oratorical painting in France, was done away with; academies and even tradition followed it. The artist's inventive faculties were called into play. He was asked to make a contribution of such signal originality that it could at once be separated or distinguished from anything that had gone on before. Artists could ask themselves in all seriousness "do you contribute or don't you contribute?"

Art floated in an ether so far out of the comprehensive reach of the people that the unwary began to believe in its profundity. Ignorance easily gets entangled in the meshes of the mysterious. And with this new art there went an impressive jargon, as mystifying as the paintings themselves, and a world-wide spread of propaganda, largely furthered by dealers, whom Mr. Craven hates with the violence of a reformer. He tells us that they began in Venice with Titian, "the first professional painter", and that they have been the enemies of great painting ever since, middlemen doing damage in the camps of painters and patrons alike. Art critics and estheticians must belong in this class, since they also direct visions and create fashions.

Mr. Craven has done a tremendous amount of reading. He predicts that Ruskin will come back and is still kneeling before the Olympian conceptions of Goethe. It is indeed difficult to see why, throughout his book, there is no mention of that gigantic illustrator, an Olympian also, Gustave Doré; difficult if one forgets that next to his hate

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for dealers is his tremendous dislike for the French and France. He is undoubtedly pro-English—though this is inconceivable in an esthetician. He will concede that Claude Lorrain had some influence upon Turner, although Turner "had more ideas and more material for landscape in a single day than the Frenchman had in a lifetime", and then show, in terms as exaggerated as the one just quoted, that Turner, Constable and Bonnington, who lived most of his life in France and is best described as a charming painter, were responsible for the French revolt against the Academy which began with men like Delacroix and Courbet and went on through the Impressionists to the present-day Modernist painting. Ingres he describes as a product of the Academy or of the French nationalistic propaganda, which, with Mr. Craven, amounts to the same thing. Ingres was "of the school, petty, unimaginative and over-weening".

It is a curious fact that Puritans have always had difficulty understanding purists. An artist must have agonies bottled up inside of him. He puts Titian and Renoir in the same boat rightly enough and belittles both, apparently, because their souls or their *minds* had not been wrung by life. "Art embodies the higher reality born of mind."

Most of his reading on art must have had an English source: his writing rings with righteousness, with the idea, not old enough for us to have forgotten it, that art must carry a message, a rather definite one, and is always greatly ennobled by the artist's suffering. It is because of this that Leonardo, whose Mona Lisa "shines out among the portraits of the world like a star", and Michael Angelo and Rembrandt and Daumier ("it is hard to believe that he is a Frenchman"), along with Hogarth and Turner who get into this *galère* somehow or other are outstanding figures in art. With "the most magnificent of painters" he is forced on another tack; "composition is the man. With Rubens it is not a technical device acquired in Italy but the inevitable coördination of the experiences and philosophy of an artist who never lost his sense of values and his love for opulent realities. . . . He was none of your little specialists of art; he was a wise man of the world, diplomat and scholar, poet and manorial lord, ingenuous and amiable, an indefatigable worker, free from Bohemian humbug and aesthetic arrogance".

Mr. Craven can let himself go. But perhaps the contradictions in the book are due to the pliability of his enthusiasms and to the force of his prejudices. The artist has many characters. It is dangerous to see the final glory or its reverse in each one as it comes under consideration. It is unquestionable that the artist can have the arrogance of Michael Angelo and the amiability of Rubens, that one can be a boor and another an ingenuous and amiable wise man of the world—though this latter is a large order. But it is difficult to see why the love of opulent reality so admirable in Rubens should be so negligible in Titian and Renoir, nor why the jealousies, the superstitions and the noted miserliness of the great Mike should be neglected while Ingres's pettinesses are stressed. One man's reputation is built upon his art and the other's destroyed by his life. Mr. Craven's system is a handy one.

He has, however, done a great work in the offhand stabs he takes, throughout the book, at the meticulous little painters of still life with which the world is now overrun and at those abstractionists who go about in fear and trembling lest some breath of life muddy the purity of their machines. Bravely, for today, he writes that "all art partakes of illustration".

It is a pity that he should have included a chapter on American art in the book, for this chapter in its inconsequentiality defeats the good in the foregoing ones, and, indeed repeats the insolence, to some extent, of that book on Modernist art which Williard Huntington Wright wrote in order, apparently, to prove that his brother and his brother's

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

friend had, with Synchronism, said the last word in painting. Perhaps there has been too little writing of a serious nature on American art. I do not know. Mr. Craven seems to be in a confused state when confronted by it. He mentions Wright's two heroes quite as though they had been treated with some importance outside the covers of his fantastic work. He illustrates the work of one American, Thomas Benton, who was the glorified hero of *Paint*, a novel Mr. Craven wrote some time ago. He says that John Sloan's "caustic renderings of New York life are the most distinguished specimens of the etcher's art since Meryon" (Whistler is omitted) and that Georgia O'Keeffe is "the foremost woman painter of the world", when she, whose "forms are as thin as paper or leaf metal" so obviously fails in that department in which he found Titian and Manet and Renoir a little wanting, to their everlasting shame.

He is just, in the French sense, about the late Preston Dickinson and John Marin, "Marin, a product of French Impressionism, is a nature poet whose fragile water colors express the magical play of light and color on broken waters and unsubstantial hills". He likes mural painting, especially that of the now fashionable Mexicans, Rivera and Orozco, probably, in the final analysis, because they have nothing to do with the hated dealers, and thus mentions along with Benton, though some time after, Boardman Robinson, whose set of decorations "needs only a more incisive study of actualities to rank with the best of modern mural paintings", and William Yarrow, who "after a long period of sequestration in the Renaissance atmosphere of Florence" is doing a series of murals on American sports for one of our universities. This last, apparently, does not touch his sense of humor.

However, a true perspective cannot be formed on the spot. Also there are sure to be friends among living men, and these can be, and often are, exceedingly black spots even in a very enlightened survey. Mr. Craven's book, in any case, is sure to put some doubts in the minds of the modernist collectors who have up to the present time felt so smug about the little experiments they have hung upon their walls in the unquestioning conviction that they were masterpieces.

GUY PÈNE DU BOIS

THE PROVINCE OF LITERARY HISTORY *by Edwin Greenlaw* (JOHNS HOPKINS PRESS. $1.75)

PROFESSOR GREENLAW rises both to defend the scholarly activities of himself and his colleagues against the criticisms of humanists and others, and to present the first in a series of monographs which shall, let us hope, triumphantly illustrate the virtues of literary history as he outlines them. His principles are that literary history is a learning separate from literary criticism, with its own laws and justification; that it should seek to interpret, not merely to accumulate facts; and that its "purpose is to study the history of civilization through literature rather than to study authors and their works as isolated phenomena".

As first stage in his defense Mr. Greenlaw ridicules critics who write elegiac passages "bewailing the loss of poets and dramatists, slain . . . by the new gorgon, Procrustes of the Ph.D. trust", or who, according to him, would "make the scholar's choices for him from the list of acknowledged masterpieces", "telling a man what he shall do to be of the elect". Mr. Greenlaw is not against literary criticism, even of the variety advocated by Mr. Foerster, though the latter, in his opinion, is concerned with "not learning, not even scholarship, but on the one hand pedagogy, and on the other hand the evangelization of the world". Mr. Greenlaw wishes simply to assert the value of literary history.

That value is in the information which the literature of a period—first- or third-rate, it doesn't much matter—gives us regarding

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the civilization of that period. This information is found usually not in realistic accounts of contemporary life but in "the poet's reaction to experience" plus "the intellectual influence upon him of his reading" plus "certain imponderables, the genius of the writer, for example". This information, then, is not definable like the solution of a scientific problem, but is an affair of vision, for which on the part of the historian "the one indispensable ingredient . . . is the imponderable magic of personality". There are of course pedantic historians, but the true historian becomes a part of the true humanism, which seeks to advance all learning. About the imponderables which the literary historian will envision Mr. Greenlaw grows eloquent, though he remains vague. In conveying the influence of his time, for example, the genius "works unconsciously", and the result is "not a knowledge that may be apprehended as fact, but a breath and finer spirit of knowledge, having its own province and its own authority".

If the literary historian really possesses the magic of personality and the vision to see the breath and finer spirit of knowledge, foolish indeed would be the critic who should belittle his work. For the graduate student who is beset by the devastating doubt whether what he is doing is worth doing at all, Mr. Greenlaw sets a high and inspiring goal. He offers the strongest case for his learning, and at the same time makes clear that other pursuits are legitimate. The critic can under the circumstances pardon his partiality for illustrations of how historians have been triumphantly right and mere critics wrong, and his disparaging tone toward a movement which he carefully labels "humanism", in quotation marks.

Nevertheless the literary critic may continue legitimately to feel that the attacks on the historians have been justified. The feeling is not because of such brilliant detective work as Professor Hotson's regarding Marlowe's death, or such profound erudition as Professor Kittredge displays in everything he writes, including the book on witchcraft. It is not on the ground that there are historical pedants, for pedants pasture in every field. It is rather on the ground, first, that Mr. Greenlaw is insufficiently candid regarding the true motives of the historians; second, that he sets up an impractical distinction between criticism and history; and third, that he perverts the true aim of literary study by his emphasis on literature as mere material for understanding a civilization.

Every scholar is prone to see the value of his own work favorably, and Mr. Greenlaw is far from an exception. Yet what, to be candid, are the animating motives that keep most of the historians going? A desire to advance learning? Hardly. More likely the desire to advance academically and win distinction, to satisfy intellectual curiosity psychologically akin to that of the puzzle fan and the detective-story writer, and to satisfy a professional pride in doing something subtle, esoteric, and difficult. Mr. Kittredge is on this matter probably more candid than facetious. In the Preface to his study of *Gawain and the Green Knight*, which in solving intricate puzzles is immeasurably beyond even *The Bishop Murder Case*, he tells us: "The author does not play bridge—and it is impossible to swim or to sail a boat in a New England winter. Let this suffice as an answer to anybody who thinks that he has wasted his time. At all events, it is his own time that he has spent—and *suum cuique* is a venerable precept".

Mr. Greenlaw makes a separation between literary criticism and history which can be maintained in theory but not in practice without injury to one or the other. Both functions, in the field with which Mr. Greenlaw deals, are performed by the same professors of English. That history aids criticism is true; but human beings, including professors of English, are prone to see things only in the light of their major interests. If these major interests are historical, literary sensi-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tivity and understanding are bound to suffer. Perhaps Mr. Foerster erred in emphasizing pedagogy and "the evangelization of the world", but not in feeling something lacking about the average historian-professor of English. For as things exist today, that professor is supposed to be a professor of literature, not history, but too often is just the opposite.

When Mr. Greenlaw declares that the purpose of literary history is "to study the history of civilization through literature", he perverts the true aim of literary study. Professors, whether Mr. Greenlaw like it or not, are paid to train students; and what should be primary in that training, in departments of English, is not an oblique approach to anthropology but the understanding of an art and the training of a taste which shall take a right delight in beauty. This would seem too obvious for argument. But if one should make such a declaration at a meeting of literary historians, he might feel as out of place as the Negro mammy who wandered into the gallery of the Episcopal church. As the sermon progressed she began to sway and ejaculate, "Hallelujah! Praise de Lawd! Finally a perturbed usher approached and remonstrated:

"My good woman, you mustn't."

"But I'se getting religion."

"But my good woman, this is no place for that!"

ALAN REYNOLDS THOMPSON

A MONUMENT TO ST. AUGUSTINE

by M. C. D'Arcy, S.J.; Maurice Blondel; Christopher Dawson; Etienne Gilson; C. C. Martindale, S.J.; Jacques Maritain; Erich Przywara, S.J.; John-Baptist Reeves, O.P.; B. Roland-Gosselin; E. I. Watkin (DIAL PRESS. $5.00)

THESE essays in commemoration of St. Augustine's fifteenth centenary, written by four priests and six prominent Catholic laymen, come to us bearing the Censor's *Nihil obstat*, and such is the wariness of the general reader today that he does not expect them to tell him much about St. Augustine. In much the same way that if he were to see the portrait that Fra Angelico has painted of St. Thomas Aquinas he would study it less for its subject than for its artist and the *quattrocento*, he prefers to examine this "monument" for what it may reveal to him about the architecture of Catholic thought in the twentieth century. He approaches it therefore with two questions. First, in what esteem is the teaching of St. Augustine held by the Church today? Second, what kind of champions has the Church today? The first question is likely to be mere curiosity—a kind of theological dilettantism. The second, however, expresses a genuine interest; and since the contributors to this volume are presumably among the best that English and continental Catholicism can offer, there seems some hope of getting an answer.

Let us first satisfy our dilettantism. If we may go by M. Gilson, who is the most revealing in this matter, it would seem that Augustinianism has been in unofficial "exile", owing to its incompleteness. As a philosophical instrument it cannot compare with the systematic perfection of Thomism. It was, however, an inspiration to St. Thomas, and today a "purifying, liberating, creative task" lies ahead of it: "to do well what has been badly done by modern idealism".

Before attempting to answer our second question we had better consider our general impression of these essays (since there is not space to describe them in detail). It is, without question, a good one. We like the skill with which they are written, their disciplined thinking, their even, humble, earnest spirit. The homage that they do St. Augustine is sincere and well considered. In passing they offer, for the problems that beset us all, a solution that has been tried and perfected. In fact, such a book as this is one of the few places where we can still get a consistently spiritual answer to our questions. But doesn't it possess some special quality that will en-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

able us to distinguish its authors roughly from those who have defended the same faith and philosophy in the past? We have heard a great deal of neo-Thomism. Roughly, what kind of men are behind it?

They are most scrupulous scholars, experts in the analysis of every phase of religious thought and emotion. If we stand off at a distance, overlooking individual differences, and judge this book in its simplest aspects, that is what we perceive. Such a perception implies, it is true, a certain lack of inspiration here. And it must be admitted that there are times when we wonder, as these physicians study the divine hunger that tortured their famous patient, whether they ever suffered from the same trouble themselves. In these essays we frequently fail to find that intuitive simplicity which comes with religious inspiration. In how many of the authors, we ask therefore, was the personal experience of God vivid? And only in the case of M. Gilson can we be quite sure that it was. Yet we know, of course, that it would be unfair to find fault with these Augustinians because they are not Augustines. As psychologists, philosophers, moralists, historians, belletrists (the theologians will come later, we are told, in a second volume) they have given a good account of themselves; and there is one among them who has had the faith to prophesy. If, as it seems, differing from most of their predecessors, they have addressed themselves principally to a secular audience, we of that audience are forced to acknowledge that they have maintained a standard that we can expect of few other groups in the modern world.

GERALD SYKES

FRANCE: A STUDY IN NATIONALITY
by André Siegfried (YALE. $2.00)

AFTER having observed democracy as interpreted by the Anglo-Saxon spirit in *America Comes of Age*, André Siegfried now turns his attention to the politics of his own country, which indeed have never ceased to interest him since he ran for the Chamber of Deputies in his youth. He contrasts the French national character with the American and English as manifested in their diverse political methods.

The secret of French politics, so incomprehensible to foreigners, lies in the famous French individualism, that useful formula which explains the self-sufficient attitude of the bourgeois, the peasant, and the nation as a whole; and it is because French democracy devotes its energy to protecting that individual freedom, politically by resistance to tyranny and intellectually by resistance to the Church, that it seems to be non-progressive and inefficient in material achievement. Beginning with the early years of the present Republic, M. Siegfried traces the growth of political parties and actually succeeds in differentiating the manifold and ever-changing societies which make up the three main divisions of Left, Center, and Right He insists upon the great importance of the deputy as the government's only direct means of contact with the people. In the present régime he sees three persistent tendencies: popular government, a tendency towards despotism, and Bonapartism or autocratic power, but each of these impulses constantly exerts a restraining influence upon the others.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

POETRY

FATAL INTERVIEW *by Edna St. Vincent Millay* (HARPERS. $2.00)

ALMOST from the beginning Edna St. Vincent Millay has commemorated the single theme of death. We are used to thinking that she writes chiefly about love and sometimes about beauty, but it is actually the death of love and beauty that she designates. There is nothing uncommon, of course, in such an approach to these things; the very nature of the poet's imagination has made it the traditional approach. And Edna Millay at her best is a traditional poet with the same immemorial vision and the same old beautiful words for expressing it. There are no innovations in that portion of her work which is good; it differs from the work of other good poets simply through what is unique in Miss Millay's personality—a personality always feminine, often sharp and sometimes "modern".

It is this deciding element of personality which has so often both marred and made Miss Millay's work. For it emerges in base and noble forms, sometimes because of a poetic struggle, sometimes because of a deliberate intention on the poet's part. The rich poetic melancholy that burns in Villon or dreams in Keats or broods in Arnold is rare in Miss Millay: her moods are less universal than personal—the moods of a woman who has participated in life only to be thrown back upon herself again, a victim of her sex. All the love poetry of Edna St. Vincent Millay is the result of this one fact; but all this love poetry is not born of one mood. It is born rather of three moods, kindred ones if you like, but highly unequal in their effect upon Edna Millay the poet. For she is sometimes sentimental, sometimes cynical and sometimes, in the exact meaning of the word, unillusioned. The sentimentalist is an Edna Millay caught for a moment with all her defenses down, or a woman whose sense of beauty and sincerity of feeling are betrayed by pretty notions: the sentimentalist wrote *The Road to Avrille* of *The Buck in the Snow*, for example, and the fifth sonnet of *Fatal Interview*. The cynic is this same sentimentalist wearing a smart domino she despises but momentarily pirouettes in; it is a reprehensible Edna Millay, masked, chic, frivolous, theatrical, indulging her bitterness cheaply. Of her cynicism Miss Millay perfected a formula and established a tradition: the formula of anti-romantic love, the tradition of light feminine poetry that an inverted sentimentalist like Dorothy Parker found perfect for her needs. The cynical Edna Millay is the clever Edna Millay of *A Few Figs from Thistles* and the semi-colloquial sonnets; it is the Edna Millay who captured the crowd and led people of sensibility to wonder.

The only Edna St. Vincent Millay who has ever counted is the honestly unillusioned woman who sees love come and go reflectively, and whose regret is charged with the same passion as her love. Not only is this Millay not cynical; she is also not cheaply gallant. The experiences of this Millay have meaning, and she never schemes to assure us they haven't; and then, when she is true to herself, sometimes the melancholy of the great poets steals into her verse and makes it memorable love poetry.

Fatal Interview is all love poetry, fifty-two sonnets which tell no story, but simply round the circle of Miss Millay's moods. As always

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(except for two or three of them) they recite over and over the death of love; but the moods invoked by love's passing are varied and many. Poetically *Fatal Interview* is inferior to Miss Millay's best work, but as a record of her special spirit a good deal can be said for it. For the old meretricious cynicism has almost vanished; and the girlishness which, though often charming, seemed laid on, is exchanged for maturity. Love has ceased to be biology and is closer to the "terrible flame"; and love brings bitterness less because it passes swiftly than because one of the two lovers tires sooner than the other. If, as I think is true, the reader often feels that these poems lack full sincerity of accent, he is partly compensated by the rightness of attitude, poetically, behind them.

The weakness of these sonnets, as poetry, is that they fail to touch heights. Miss Millay at her best has combined passion with style in a way she never does here. Rather than a genuine personal intensity, rather than mastery of utterance, the best of these sonnets have the charm of the grand style:

Women have loved before as I love now;
At least, in lively chronicles of the past—
Of Irish waters by a Cornish prow
Or Trojan waters by a Spartan mast
Much to their cost invaded—here and there,
Hunting the amorous line, skimming the rest,
I find some woman bearing as I bear
Love like a burning city in her breast.
I think however that of all alive
I only in such utter ancient way
Do suffer love; in me alone survive
The unregenerate passions of a day
When treacherous queens, with death upon the tread,
Heedless and wilful, took their knights to bed.

This is grandiose rather than intense; but it has echoes of a great tradition. And many of the sonnets sustain a level of just this height. There are conspicuous exceptions; and Miss Millay much too often succumbs to facile verbiage which is the very antithesis of real poetic intensity:

When you are corn and roses and at rest
I shall endure, a dense and sanguine ghost,
To haunt the scene where I was happiest,
To bend above the thing I loved the most . . .

Though other poets well may envy such pellucid expression, with Miss Millay this comes perilously close to padding, and is obviously a making use of the easiest way out. Her very gifts, unless they are a constant challenge to her, must end by compromising and defeating her. For Edna Millay will forever be cursed with the handicap of having a second-best manner that can be as inviting as it is pernicious.

LOUIS KRONENBERGER

SELECTED POEMS OF WILLIAM VAUGHN MOODY *edited by Robert Morss Lovett* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $2.50)

THIS selection of the poems of William Vaughn Moody comes at a significant time, and should be warmly welcomed. Moody died in 1910. In the following year began the concerted Imagist movement. The war, plunging the sensitive and reflective part of mankind into vast depression and confusion, of which the reflex seemed to be exaggerated freedom in society, experimentation in art, and what might be called the *tragedy of disgust* as almost a new literary *genre*, put a sudden halt to Moody's expanding reputation, and indeed obscured him almost beyond memory. One of his contemporaries (quoted by Professor Lovett) wrote of him in the *Dial* in 1912:

> The main thing to be emphasized concerning Moody is that he was a poet by the grace of God, and such a poet as had not been raised up before him in America—or even in the English-speaking world—since the eclipse of the great line of the older singers. . . . He seems to be the one authentic "maker" that our young century has given to the world. . . .

This is in perhaps too high a strain of praise; but exaggerated or not, these words about Moody are well enough grounded to

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

be worth quoting. And they have their point at the present time. For unless I am much mistaken, the tide of experimentation in verse is receding. The contemporary poets are struggling back, painfully and falteringly, toward the true music of English verse.

Moody died when those who loved him best and hoped most of him, such as Professor Lovett and Professor Manly, believed that he was growing toward his full stature. He left two completed lyric dramas, and one, *The Death of Eve*, which remains a fragment. This trilogy embodied his highest and profoundest poetic thought and vision. Without knowing what this thought was, without some acquaintance with the scope of this vision, a reader can have no conception of the range of Moody's feeling, of the power of his poetic faculty to express itself in beauty and reflection, or of the character of his mind and the influences that shaped it. Naturally, but unfortunately, the lyric dramas receive wholly inadequate representation in Professor Lovett's volume. The "songs and lyric passages" which he quotes from them offer small clue to the central conception of the dramas, to the gradual development of the themes in them, or to the architecture and structure that give them frame and meaning.

This present volume, therefore, will be of solid use to Moody's memory only if it leads eventually to the republication of the first of the two volumes of his works. The second, containing his prose plays, *The Great Divide* and *The Faith Healer*, may be left on the shelf for historical study. Professor Lovett, it seems to me, might well have included one of the poetic dramas complete in his book of selections, even at the cost of abbreviating his Introduction, which, despite its affectionate personal reminiscences of the poet, might well have been abridged. Certainly Moody would have been much better represented had he done so. *The Masque of Judgment*, reprinted entire, would have made much clearer Moody's claim to be a poet who lies at least within sight of the borders of greatness, for it would have revealed the working of his mind when he applied it to a large and intensely felt spiritual and philosophic design. It would not have restricted his genius to a number of shorter poems prompted by various impulses, or to excerpts and elegant passages.

Moody's briefer poems are, of course, well represented; indeed only two or three which appear in the original two volumes of his *Poems and Plays* have been omitted. Professor Lovett to the contrary, a good deal seems to me flat and ordinary. But every poet requires to be taken at his best when we are considering his value to the world. Moody's best (excluding the dramas) may be found in such poems as the *Ode in Time of Hesitation* and *The Moon Moth*. The *Ode* is a noble and surely deathless poem, in the highest sense a laureate achievement, confronting the conscience of America with the ideal which its greatest and most generous spirits have imagined for it, and which is so often degraded into brutality and injustice:

O bitter, bitter shade!
Wilt thou not put the scorn
And instant tragic question from thine eyes?

Thus Moody, standing in imagination before the famous bronze by St. Gaudens on the Boston Common, contrasted the chivalry of Robert Gould Shaw and his Negro troops with the later military exploit of his country in the Philippines:

Are we the eagle nation Milton saw
Mewing its mighty youth,
Soon to possess the mountain winds of truth,
And be a swift familiar of the sun . . .

More purely poetry, since it is devoted to a personal rather than a public theme, is *The Moon Moth*, which contains music worthy in all truth of "the great line of the older singers":

Dance slowly, singing as if Pindar heard
And loved again this sweet fruit of his breast.
O let the strophe, like a smooth sea-bird,
Drift down the wave, and wheel again to rest

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

One long, long instant on the glittering crest.
Scare not the sacred peacock where he spreads
His fan upon the wall;
Let not a flower, let not a petal fall
From those fresh-woven garlands on your heads;
Dance delicately slow as yon light treads
From isle to isle; though late, love comes at last
to all!

Moody's work leaves but a small bulk, and even his few sheaves must be winnowed and some chaff driven away. But though the kernels left are few, they are fine grain.

THEODORE MORRISON

KINDS OF LOVE *by Max Eastman* (SCRIBNER'S. $2.50)

POPE'S limbo—where heroes' wits are kept in ponderous vases and beaux' in snuffboxes and tweezer cases—is also, I submit, inhabited with the poetical exercises of many a gentleman of undoubted intelligence. Mr. Eastman's poetry certainly belongs there. It is a curious and perplexing mixture—at once outspoken and insipid, passionate and toneless. And the only good reason for this seems to be that Mr. Eastman is cursed with a terrible sincerity, which usurps all the functions that properly belong to his imagination. Nobody would doubt his sincerity, and some will be moved by it; but the qualities of his poetry are far more dubious. Its single virtue, to my mind, is a smoothness of rhythm:

And half of Elaine, with bubbles about her
navel,
And leaf-shaped shadows dancing against her
breast,
Pearls in her lashes, curls licked meek and level,
Half of Elaine, like music, demands the rest . . .

yet the same smoothness will astonish us with this kind of degeneracy:

Death is more tranquil than the life of love,
More calm, more sure, and more unanguished.
O the path among the trees is far more tranquil
to the dead
Than to these anxious hearts, uptroubled from
their beds,
Who pace in pallid darkness on the leaves,
For no good reason—for no reason
But because their limbs will not lie still upon
the sheet.
Their limbs will not lie still. O how I pity them.
Sad hearts—their marrow is a-quiver,
And they can not lay them down in tranquil
sadness like the dead.

You would not call the structure of this poetical: it is too musically stressed for prose, and too flat and facile for poetry, too well made to be ragged, too neat not to be drab. And the same holds good of the content. Apart from the first two lines, which contain a platitude beyond even Swinburne's reach, the rest is neither fact nor fancy, neither vision nor dream. The other poems in this collection, it is true, are structurally far superior: but the weaknesses which cry from this one's house-top will be heard, if you listen carefully, groaning in the cellars of almost all the rest.

There is a qualification. For Mr. Eastman keeps his ideas on one side, and his emotions on the other. Nobody would scorn his ideas. When he makes a straightforward statement, as in *Modernist Poetry*, he has something to say that is well worth saying. We may doubt the validity of his statement, but at least it is intelligent criticism, expressed with dignity, and somewhat the more effective for being decorated with verse. His emotional work, on the other hand, of which the better part of this collection is composed, is invariably trite and variably skilful. It is the necessity and the education of immature poets to embroider and analyze and often to enrich a platitude: but when a mature poet, or rather a man who is otherwise a man of mature ideas, continues to write in platitudes, then his emotions are, in terms of poetry, childish emotions. As a liberal thinker and critic, Mr. Eastman has a real strength and wisdom; as a poet, he shows all the less violent symptoms of permanent adolescence.

GEORGE DANGERFIELD

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE BOOKMAN'S MONTHLY SCORE

COMPILED BY FRANK PARKER STOCKBRIDGE, LIFE MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, IN COÖPERATION WITH THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES OF AMERICA

It is rather an amazing coincidence that simultaneously with the disappearance from the Monthly Score of "All Quiet on the Western Front" a book by another German author should leap to the head of the fiction list. It is, of course, probable that the demand for Vicki Baum's "Grand Hotel" has been stimulated to some extent by the New York success of the play which was made from it, but its popularity is nation-wide and seems to be the result of the word-of-mouth recommendations which, after all, account for most of the library circulation of books.

—F. P. S.

NOVELS

1. GRAND HOTEL	*Vicki Baum*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN
2. IMPERIAL PALACE	*Arnold Bennett*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN
3. THE DEEPENING STREAM	*Dorothy Canfield*	HARCOURT, BRACE
4. ANGEL PAVEMENT	*J. B. Priestley*	HARPERS
5. THE BRIDGE OF DESIRE*	*Warwick Deeping*	MCBRIDE
6. YEARS OF GRACE	*Margaret Ayer Barnes*	HOUGHTON MIFFLIN
7. BACK STREET	*Fannie Hurst*	COSMOPOLITAN
8. CAKES AND ALE	*W. Somerset Maugham*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN
9. READER, I MARRIED HIM*	*Anne Green*	DUTTON
10. CIMARRON	*Edna Ferber*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN
11. SEED	*Charles G. Norris*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN
12. PHILIPPA	*Anne Douglas Sedgwick*	HOUGHTON MIFFLIN

GENERAL

1. EDUCATION OF A PRINCESS	*Marie, Grand Duchess of Russia*	VIKING
2. THE STORY OF SAN MICHELE	*Axel Munthe*	DUTTON
3. LITTLE AMERICA	*Richard E. Byrd*	PUTNAM
4. THE LIVES OF A BENGAL LANCER	*Major F. Yeats-Brown*	VIKING
5. HUMANITY UPROOTED	*Maurice Hindus*	CAPE & SMITH
6. THE GREEN PASTURES	*Marc Connelly*	FARRAR & RINEHART
7. THE MYSTERIOUS UNIVERSE	*Sir James Jeans*	MACMILLAN
8. THE ROAD TO CULTURE*	*Charles Gray Shaw*	FUNK & WAGNALLS
9. ASTROLOGY: YOUR PLACE AMONG THE STARS	*Evangeline Adams*	DODD, MEAD
10. THE ADAMS FAMILY	*James Truslow Adams*	LITTLE, BROWN
11. INDIA: LAND OF THE BLACK PAGODA	*Lowell Thomas*	CENTURY
12. N BY E*	*Rockwell Kent*	PUTNAM

* This title has not previously appeared in the Monthly Score.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ABOUT BOOK-COLLECTING

by Wilfred Partington

End-Papers and Marginalia

London, May.

IN THE Beginning was the Word; and the first printed Word was with Gutenberg. I shall ever remember how my hand trembled when first I handled an hitherto unrecorded specimen of one of the earliest printings—a four-page fragment of the *De Octo Partibus Orationis* (1450), the Latin Grammar of a thousand years of unpopular popularity which was written by Aelius Donatus, the teacher of St. Jerome, in the fourth century. My hand trembled not because the precious fragment had been lent to me; not because it was worth hundreds of times its weight in gold. The reason was that in these soiled and age-worn vellum leaves, with their large characters in faltering alignment and muddy, uncertain inking, was the Beginning of Things. The mystical aura that surrounds creation seemed more pronouncedly about these leaves the longer one gazed at them. Had not Johann Gutenberg himself, with glowing eyes and anxious heart, drawn this vellum off his rude wooden types, and scanned the lines with conscious pride mixed with humble wonderment? Generations later, some old bookbinder had picked up these same leaves; and pasted them down as part of the lining of a large binding—hence their preservation. By the same token, one of these days anybody may happen upon a scrap of vellum through whose grime and ink shines the light that we still need on the dark doings of Coster of Haarlem, Gutenberg at Strasburg and Mainz, and Waldfoghel of Avignon. For despite the learned Doctors whose researches have deserved better luck, there is much mystery about the first printings. When we come, some twenty-five years later, to William Caxton, we are on surer ground. But the thing is still a marvel of marvels: and England's proudest nobles and fair ladies would visit his tenement, the Red-pale in Westminster, to see the new wooden wonder with the same thrilling eagerness that Gutenberg's patrons had crowded to him at Mainz. With Caxton it is less a matter of his position in printing chronology than that he was the first printer in England and the first printer of English. Moreover, he has his special place in the great record of Early Printing for his individual enterprise and his own literary accomplishments.

THE CAXTON CONTROVERSY

I have been minded to write these few introductory lines because Early Printing has been the subject of much concern in England and America during the last few weeks. The announcement *just made* that the Dean and Chapter of York Minster, *a year ago*, had sold five Caxtons and eighteen other books by early printers to Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach for $100,000 has had wide publicity and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

aroused considerable controversy. Curiously enough, with all the columns of late printing which this important episode has evoked, the main points—on which I have some new considerations to offer—have been missed. It must be confessed that the Dean and Chapter were between the devil and the deep Atlantic, the former being that poverty which so sadly hinders the preservation of English cathedrals and other beautiful architecture. Apart from the Cathedral buildings themselves, the priceless medieval windows of York Minster are one of England's glories. After $180,000 worth of restoration work had been done, the authorities found themselves wanting another $250,000 to complete urgent preservation measures. On the one hand, the York Minster Library—founded by Alcuin about the year 780, and which in the eleventh century was described as the most celebrated in Britain or France—contained these Caxtons and other rarities: on the other hand, there was Doctor Rosenbach ready with one hundred thousand of the blessed fabric-preserving dollars. The issue was: Cathedral or Library? It is easy to criticize when you have not to make the decision. Life is hard for our Deans these days, although they always seem to me as cheerful and cherubic as in olden times when they had troubles at least as awkward as shortage of cash and Prayer-book revision.

The criticisms have been alternatively: (1) that the books ought not to have been sold; (2) that they ought not to have been allowed to leave the country; (3) that the business ought not to have been done secretly. There is more in all this than appears on the surface. There are a goodly number of religious and other institutions in Britain similarly situated; and I need only instance Hereford Cathedral, whose collection of chained books is one of the finest, if not the best, in the world. The York Minster authorities have set a bold precedent. The first criticism is hardly arguable in the circumstances. There is more strength in the third, for in the case of books to which national pride or sentiment attaches, such as unique copies, the "open field and fair favor" policy disposes of the objection. Even so, the result will be more often the same than the protests or the liberality of the critics would lead us to believe. In this York Minster instance, the Chapter put the onus entirely on themselves, although the business was hardly a secret one, for the British Museum experts were consulted. There can in fairness be only congratulations for the American collector who was asked to buy, and did so gladly and generously. Argument chiefly rages round the second criticism; and much of it is foolish and ill-informed. It is only occasionally that a unique item leaves Britain, against thousands of books, rare and valuable though they be, which are well represented in her public collections. Who but a fool or a boor would begrudge these latter—the treasures of English literature—going to another English-speaking nation to fulfil such a high destiny?

Early printing is always appreciating in value; and Caxtons are very hard to come by. Some idea of the scarcity of Caxtons may be indicated by the fact that William Blades catalogued 99 of the Westminster printer's works, including a few second and third editions, of which thirty-eight were known by single copies or fragments only. The figures are now subject to slight revision; but the proportion is not greatly different. The Caxtons secured by America from York Minster were all highly desirable acquisitions; but consideration of them throws rather a different light on the controversy. They comprised: (1) *The Hors, the Shepe and the Ghoos* (2nd edition, 1749); (2) *The Chorle* [The Churl] *and the Birde* (2nd ed., 1749); (3) *Boke of the Fayt of Armes and Chyvalrye* (1st ed., 1489); (4) Cicero's *De Amicitia* printed with *De Senectute* (1481, not complete); (5) a 7-leaved fragment of the last named (1481). The remainder of the group of 23 volumes included works of relatively minor importance printed by Wynkyn de

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Worde and Richard Pynson, although one *Quæstiones Super Aristotelis Physica* (1481) is notable for the reason that it pre-dates by four years *The Book of St. Albans,* the most famous production from the same Press of the schoolmaster-printer at St. Albans, Io. Canonicus.

NEW CONSIDERATIONS OF THE EPISODE

Now although the first two books, which were written by John Lydgate, the Court Poet and disciple of Chaucer, are only second editions, their importance in Caxton representation is that they are perfect copies; and that the *Chorle and the Birde* is the only one known of this edition. It is the fact that today there is not a copy of either of these second editions in any of the British national collections (other than a 6-11 fragment of No. 1 at Cambridge); and not one is known in private hands. At the same time, there is always the possibility of one or both being discovered in England—an eventuality obviously unlikely in the United States. Against this, there are copies of the first editions of both works at Cambridge (Eng.).

These acquisitions have to be taken in conjunction with the magnificent representation of Early Printing in collections in the United States. Anyone who thinks that America's book-collecting is a recent phase and coincident with her new wealth—and apparently there are many of that opinion—should look, for example, into this department of Early Printed Books. The old American collectors were keen and discerning. There was General Rush C. Hawkins, who began specializing in fifteenth-century books in 1855; and his great lead has been followed with such success by collectors like John Boyd Thacher (Library of Congress), Henry E. Huntington, and J. P. Morgan, that I estimate—based on Mr. G. P. Winship's Census—the number of "Fifteeners" in the U. S. A. as now being very few short of 7,000, which is about half the total in Britain's public libraries, exclusive of those in private ownership; and the Morgan and Huntington collections must be as representative as those of the British Museum and our University libraries. This is a wonderful achievement.

This important affair of the York Minster books had yet another curious side. The entire British press in detailing, from the official list, the Early Printings sold, stated that they included *The Legend of New England* printed by Pynson in 1516. This title must have made every American and British book expert gasp: it made Dr. Rosenbach's purchase price of $100,000 the proverbial song. He could well have advanced another hundred thousand dollars for a lot including such a rarity. As it happens, however, the title was an error; and should have read Capgrave's *New Legend of England*—which is quite another legend. Of this *Kalendre of the New Legend of England,* to give its full title, the B. M. has two copies. It is a condensed English translation of the *Nova Legenda Angliae* of the Augustinian friar John Capgrave, theologian and historian (1393-1464).

WILLIAM PENN'S BOOKPLATE

I received the other day a bookseller's catalogue which prompted the query: where are the collectors of bookplates? During the five years after the Great War a number of elaborate and delightfully printed publications devoted to bookplate art came to my table from both sides of the Atlantic, suggesting a not inconsiderable collecting interest. That interest was stronger among American than English bookmen, as was borne out by the *Record of Private Collectors,* which I was responsible for editing and in which the proportion of entries was twenty to one in favor of the former. To most bookmen the interest in "Ex-Libris" is only a flutter of emotion as compared with the grand passion of book-collecting. They can all spare the "unforgiving minute" for a curious or noteworthy plate when inside a book they have perhaps just acquired—but outside books! . . . Yet there were ardent gatherers

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of "Ex-Libris" designs; and must be yet. Nevertheless Mr. Hugh Mellor (19 Sydenham Hill, London) is the only bookseller, to my knowledge, who has catalogued a "run" of specimens for a long time. His list is curious for its range. The first and chief item is the bookplate of "William Penn, Esq., Proprietor of Pennsylvania, very rare, $25". (I have translated the currency.) The next is a reprint of the same plate at half a dollar. Then the list jumps to the bookplate of the "New York Society Library, 1789, $6.50"; to be followed by the armorial 'Ex-Libris" designs of English authors like Wordsworth, Trollope, and Sheridan, which are offered at an average price of under a dollar—or half the cost of my dog's license when I remember to pay it. This is not, however, the modest limit. Thirty cents is asked for the sign and seal of "The Hasty Pudding Library". Where on earth and what was this library? I should like to have tasted this pudding.

THE PASTON LETTERS

Burton, Junior, in his Notes here for April, mentioned the forthcoming sale in London of some of the original Paston Letters. These Letters—the sale of which had been sanctioned by the High Court subject to a "substantial amount" being realized—were to the number of 155, being only a portion of the famous correspondence associated with the Paston family in Norfolk. They are most important sources for light on English life in the Middle Ages; and they have had two able editors in Fenn and Gairdner. Many of the documents bear such historic signatures as Warwick the Kingmaker, Elizabeth, Duchess of Suffolk who was sister to Edward IV, and Sir John Fastolf, the name which instantly conjures up the blustering knight immortalized by Shakespeare. Apparently the reserve was too substantial; for the 155 letters were withdrawn at $29,000, the under-bidder being Mr. Gabriel Wells. I mention the event particularly because Professor H. S. Bennett, of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, wrote a pertinent letter to *The Times* about the correspondence. He raised the awkward question —how it came about that it left the Library of George III, to whom it was given by John Fenn (who was knighted in recognition of the gift); disappeared for one hundred years; and then turned up at Orwall Park after the death of Colonel Tomlin in 1889, being inherited by its present owner? Incidentally, I have come across instances of equally mysterious "transfers" of notable documents, which instances, to the researcher, make almost as exciting reading as the originals. Professor Bennett proceeded to state that there were over one thousand of the Paston Letters, of which by far the greater number are already in the British Museum, while a few are in the University libraries. Then comes his final comment, which gives point to what has been said here about the Caxtons: "Even if the small portion of the correspondence now for sale goes to America, as is suggested, we may be sure that it will receive fitting editorial attention there, and that photographic copies will be readily available for scholars in this country".

* * *

Catalogue humor of the month:

Simpson: "Why Bells sound out of Tune."
cf. Joints cracked.....6-6

The Demand for First Editions

The following table, compiled from various sources, shows the average weekly demand in England (on behalf of both American and English collectors for modern first editions during the last month. The chief feature is an all-round drop in demands. Although not sufficient to come within the table, the number of requests for Helen Thomas's *As It Was in the Beginning* and also *World Without End* was noticeable:

Rudyard Kipling	20
A. P. Herbert	19
Sir Rider Haggard	17

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Leigh Hunt	12
Sir A. Conan Doyle	11
Lewis Carroll	10
D. H. Lawrence	10
Kate Greenaway	9
Somerset Maugham	9
Sir Walter Scott	9
John Galsworthy	8
J. B. Priestley	8
Hugh Walpole	8
Arnold Bennett	7

X. Y. Z.

Books and MSS in the London Sale-rooms

Fluctuating values—"Ingoldsby" Barham's happy joke—Thackeray puts Dickens first —A rare Fielding item—Marprelate Tracts—Bibles dear and cheap— For godly Surgeons and others

Prices are fluctuating very much just now. Sometimes competition is so keen that pre-depression days seem to have come again; at other times some unusually fine bargains are being made. For example, some Pepys correspondence and relics, totalling $47,500, included a portrait of the diarist by Kneller which at $8,700 made a record price for a work of this artist. On the other hand, a full-length portrait, in water-colors, of Thackeray, a previously unknown picture by Eyre Crowe, probably painted when the author was in America, realized only $140; while the next lot was even more surprising, a first edition of Thackeray's *Rebecca and Rowena* (1850), Chapman's (the publisher) own copy with, inserted opposite the woodcut of the author in bed, W. M. T.'s letter to Chapman referring to Edmund Yates's *Young Grub Street* which caused the "lasting coolness between Thackeray and Dickens", and asking for it to be lent to "Yours in bed". It was a lucky buyer who secured this for $60. It was a still luckier buyer who paid only $20 for Barham's *Ingoldsby Legends*, first series, first edition, with plates by Leech and Cruikshank (1840), with inserted two verses in Barham's script, one being his rendering of a verse of Voltaire's—

> Were I called on like Paris to view
> And decide twixt your beauties tonight
> I should just cut my apple in two
> And give each of the darlings a bite—

a happy effort of the kind whose value is amply repaid in the amusement it causes. The relations of Thackeray and Dickens, in which (as usual) the latter did not shine, came out in another autograph letter which sold at $900. In this W. M. T., writing to Blackwood in 1854, observed: "I don't agree with the reviewer. In placing the men I should, I think, put Dickens first, as undoubtedly the greatest genius of the three". Another letter by Thackeray, which changed hands at $300, was written on returning from a visit to the United States, and described his regret at leaving the hospitable doors of Philadelphia, adding: "I know I shall feel America-sick ere many years are over". These items came up at Sotheby's, the catalogue of which contained many desirable things, with A. L. S. association books, and documents predominating. A Walt Whitman first edition was Buxton Forman's copy, with his bookplate, of *November Boughs* (Philadelphia, 1888), bearing a presentation from Horace Traubel, to whom Whitman refers as "a noble faithful fellow" in an autograph letter inserted which also says: "I am weathering, to all appearances, this abt sixth whack of my war paralysis". This interesting association copy reached $60. U. S. A. interest was in another lot whose description occupied three and a half pages—a series of documents containing a complete collection of signatures of all the Presidents from Washington to Coolidge, bound in a copy of *The White House Gallery of Official Portraits of the Presidents,* realizing $350. A "Plan of the City of New York in North America"; surveyed in the years 1766 & 1767, southern sheet only, with a panoramic view of New York (pub'd by Jeffreys and Faden) sold for $130. A little-known Fielding item is his

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE BOOK MART

FOREIGN BOOKSELLERS

That Book You Want! We hold 2,000,000 vols.; new, secondhand, out-of-print, every conceivable subject. Also Rare Books and Sets of Authors. Books on approval. Outline requirements and interests; catalogues free (20 issued).
FOYLES, Charing Cross Road, London, England

THE FRANK HOLLINGS BOOKSHOP
7 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, London, Eng.
Catalogues free.
Rare and valuable books, prints, Manuscripts, Autograph letters for the Collector and Connoisseur. Write stating your requirements.

DAVIS & ORIOLI
30 Museum Street, London W. C. 1.
will send on request
1. Catalogue of books printed in the 15th, 16th and 17th Centuries.
2. A catalogue of Modern First Editions in fine state.

E. von SCHERLING
Leyden (Holland)
31a Vreewijkstraat
JUST OUT:
Rotulus, a Quarterly Bulletin for Manuscript collectors, vol. 1, 2, with catalogue containing many classics, an unpublished commentary on the gospels, early 9th century vellum ms., etc. Free on request.

HENRY DANIELSON
Catalogues of BOOKS from the Libraries of the late Sir Edmund Gosse C.B., Litt. D. and Clement K. Shorter. Post Free.
64 Charing Cross Road, London W. C. 2 England

RARE BOOKS & FIRST EDITIONS
1600—1930
FINE COLLECTORS' COPIES
New Catalogue No. 27, now printing. Post free
MAJOR HARTLEY CLARK,
18 Hertford St., London, W. 1

History of the Present Rebellion in Scotland (1st ed. For M. Cooper, 1745), of which Professor Cross recorded that no copy was known. Since that statement, made in 1918, one copy has turned up; and this second one went reasonably enough at $60. As Henry Fielding's name does not appear on the title-page, this is a book to be on the lookout for.

At Hodgsons's there appeared three Martin Marprelate tracts, Black-letter—Richard Harvey's anonymously issued *Plaine Percevall the Peace-Maker of England* (Printed in Broad-streete at the signe of the Packe-staffe, 1590), $115; Leonard Wright's *A Friendly Admonition to Martine Marprelate, and his Mates*, of which three copies only are recorded, (London, Printed by John Wolfe, 1590), $50; and T. T.'s [T. Turswell's] *A Myrror for Martinists, And all other Schismatiques* (also printed by John Wolfe, 1590), $65. When shall we get definitive bibliographies of those two elusive and fecund authors, Defoe and Swift? I never see a rarity of either without an inward hope that some good and true collector is engaged upon the works. A copy of the latter's *Meditation upon a broomstick, and somewhat beside; of the same Author's* (1st ed. E. Curll, 1710), prompted the question, although this item is well enough known. No one will go far wrong who buys early Swifts at $45, which this one realized. Some modern items in the same sale included: George Borrow's *Zincali: or, An Account of the Gypsies* (1st, 2 vols. with leaf of adverts at end of vol. 2, 1841), $18.50; his *Lavengro* (with port. 1st, adverts at end of vols. 2 and 3, end-paper defective, 1851), $15; and his *Romany Rye* (1st, with Murray's 32-page catalogue at end of vol. 1 and the 8-page list of Borrow's writings at end of vol. 2, 1857), $40; the Buxton Forman edition of Keats's Poetical Works (1883-90), $95; Trelawny's *Last Days of Shelley and Byron* (1st, 1858), $10; the Ashley Library Catalogue, 10 vols. (1922-30), $350—which is not the highest figure for this notable work, though many of the covers were slightly soiled.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

To the uninformed an old book is a valuable book, especially if it be a Bible or *The Pilgrim's Progress;* but possession of the Holy Word, in fine tattered, age-stained state, has been too often a snare and a delusion to those who have put their trust in dealers rather than in its philosophy. But if ninety-nine per cent of old Bibles are not worth ten cents as collectors' books, there are some that excite dealers to disputation, these being headed of course by Gutenberg's first Bible, worth $100,000. There was an unusual "run" of them at Sotheby's in the above-mentioned sale. Although seven examples issued between 1633 and 1639 realized under ten dollars, the first issue of the 1st edition of the Authorized Version (Black-letter, with Genealogies and folding map before Genesis, title in facsimile), printed by R. Barker, London 1611, sold at $500; and a copy of the sixth Great Bible (Black-letter, and having its title-page), printed by R. Grafton, in 1541, sold for a few dollars under.

Old medical works have many enthusiasts among both American and English collectors. There was also an interesting "run" of these in an earlier sale at the same Galleries. The most important item was a copy of John Banister's *The Historie of Man, sucked from the sappe of the most approued Anathomistes . . . for the utilitie of all godly Chirurgians* (London; printed by John Daye . . . 1578). Of this rarity only three copies are recorded as known (B. M., Bodleian, and Huntington); and this fourth one was "sucked from" the owner for just over five hundred goodly dollars—and not dear at that. On the other hand, Jean François Fernal's *Medicina* (3 parts in one vol.: Paris, 1554), the book of this celebrated sixteenth-century surgeon, whose remedies consisted of evacuants, purges, and alteratives—mostly vegetable, sold for only $7.50. The fees of our medical specialists are elastic enough, but not comparable to the range of values of the words of wisdom of their (more or less) godly predecessors.

BURTON, JUN.

THE BOOK MART

CHICAGO, ILL.

Christina Rossetti—Adelaide Crapsey—Emily Dickinson—Louise Guiney are suggested by

The Walden Book Shop
546 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago

as distinguished poets whose first editions are collectors items. Catalogues on request.

NEW YORK, N. Y.

BOOKS: OLD, RARE and NEW
In all departments of Art, Science, and Literature.
Out-of-Print books supplied. Catalogues issued.
Libraries purchased. New Books sent post free.
DAUBER *and* PINE BOOK SHOPS, Inc.
66 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK
Phone Algonquin 7880-7881 Open Evenings

Visit or Write
THE FRENCH BOOKMAN
202 West 96th St. (near Broadway)
"Headquarters for French Books and Magazines."
Careful, prompt attention and reasonable prices.
Catalogue 5c (stamps)

Rare Books
First Editions
Sporting Prints
Standard Editions
BOOKS
ONE of the finest collections of books and prints in America, supplemented by weekly importations of choice items. Prices guaranteed as low as any other shop. Every purchase guaranteed satisfactory. Deferred datings if desired. Catalogs on request.
HIMEBAUGH & BROWNE
Booksellers and Stationers
4 East 46th Street

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BON VOYAGE

Modern Gullivers; Remote Seas; Forgotten Islands; and African Jungles

BY ARTHUR BARTLETT MAURICE

SINCE Paul Gauguin went to the South Seas those islands south of the equator and between the western coast of South America and Australia have had a particular appeal for painter men. In *Manga Reva: The Forgotten Islands* (Bobbs-Merrill. $4.00), Robert Lee Eskridge, one of the most highly esteemed of the Chicago artists, who did the murals of Marco Polo's journey in the Palmer House lobby and won the Martin Cahn prize for his painting, Stone Fishing, writes of seven months passed in the chief island of the Gambier group, which lie due west of Peru and Chile, and to which the French have given the name *les îles oubliées*.

From the lips of Dowager Queen Marau of Tahiti Mr. Eskridge first heard the term, with the information that in the "forgotten islands" was to be found, as nowhere else, the soul of Polynesia. But to reach them was no light task. They were more than a thousand miles to the southeast of Tahiti. No boat visited them except a fishing schooner once a year, or perhaps once in two years. But Pedro Miller the pearl diver was found, and with him, on the *Vaihiria*, a boat chartered from a Chinaman for the summer, Mr. Eskridge sailed for the discovery of a land of mystery, persisting superstitions, and curious legends, one of them concerning a lost continent, an Atlantis of the Pacific. There is a leisurely, old-world flavor to the narrative. A dreamer ("a little mad—what artist is not?" as his editor Miss Eunice Tietjens suggests), Mr. Eskridge is still capable of a touch of modern irony; referring to yesterday in Polynesia as the "sentimental decade—the Frederick O'Brien *siècle*".

Out of the experiences and impressions of twenty-five years in the South Pacific already reflected in some twenty earlier books, Beatrice Grimshaw has written *Isles of Adventure* (Houghton Mifflin. $3.50). A round-the-world trip of six months, planned in the early days of the present century, expanded, like the magic tent in the Arabian Nights, until at the end it covered the author's life. She had been a young woman journalist in Dublin, and was simultaneously editing a society journal and sub-editing a sporting paper, when the urge came to go to the South Sea Islands. Miss Grimshaw analyzes the fascination of the South Seas as "a heady brew compounded of various ingredients". One is the vivid and striking scenery. Then too, even in these days of swift steamers and airplanes there is still an exquisite remoteness, and there is leisure, between hours of work, to think and dream.

Among many other adventures she was the first white woman to ascend the Fly River. When, in 1909, she first passed through the Solomon Islands, called by those who live in them the "Sorrowful Islands", Jack London and his wife were there. "Poor, splendid Jack London, the Villon of the nineteenth century, with his shining talent and brave heart, and his bizarre delight in brutality and the criminal world", is Miss Grimshaw's comment and tribute.

Cherry Kearton, author of *The Island of Penguins* (McBride. $3.00), the small island rock south of the Cape of Good Hope, likens himself to a modern Gulliver, descending upon a strange land, inhabited not by Lilliputians, but by millions of creatures,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED